Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred
Vol. 33, Issue 8
SEPTEMBER 2025

Shore Thing

Hard-charging Journalism adds Haskell to growing story

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AMENITIES: *5/8th-mile clay-based sand training track, Puett Starting Gate, 6-horse Eurociser, professional exercise riders from Laurel under the supervision of licensed farm trainer Sonja Aleksic.*

Congratulations to the connections of these July winners, who all spent time at Merryland for rest, rehab or training

Downtown Channel
Won at Saratoga on 7/6

Golden Ring
Won Maiden Special Weight at Monmouth Park on 7/11

Bodecream
Won at Penn National on 7/11

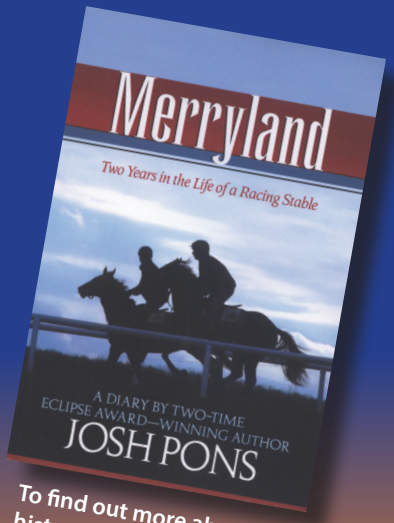
English Castle
Maiden win at Saratoga on 7/19

Buzzaway
3rd in Brookmeade S at Colonial on 7/19

Our Miss Crossbow
Allowance winner at Charles Town on 7/10

Public Defender
Allowance winner at Colonial Downs on 7/23

Cha Cha Tap
Allowance winner at Colonial Downs on 7/23



To find out more about this historic Maryland farm, call for a signed complimentary copy of MERRYLAND, now in its second printing.

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Midlantic Fall Yearlings

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 • 11AM

TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

— Set List —

Back in region, Journalism adds Haskell win

Already the Preakness Stakes winner in Maryland, California-based Journalism ships to Monmouth Park and adds the Grade 1 Haskell to strong 2025 season. By Paul Halloran. Page 28

Remembering a legend: D. Wayne Lukas

Known all over the world for his success as a trainer, D. Wayne Lukas (who died at 89 in June) made a big impact on the Mid-Atlantic as well. By Vinnie Perrone. Page 34

Steeplechase Times: Summer at Colonial, Saratoga

Virginia's Colonial Downs and New York's Saratoga Race Course host strong steeplechase stands in July and August. Page 46

Maryland-bred Romeo realizes big payday

After winning the Bashford Manor Stakes at Churchill Downs, Maryland-bred 2-year-old Romeo brings $1.7 million as supplement to Fasig-Tipton July sale in Kentucky. By Ali Çetinock. Page 52

Pennsylvania-bred yearling shines at Saratoga

Breeder Lizzie Merryman built broodmare Zeezee Zoomzoom's career one horse at a time through Grade 1 winner Caravel, stakes horse Witty and now a $1.4 million Saratoga yearling colt by Justify. By Joe Clancy. Page 56

Colonial Downs: Slam Notion wins Star de Naskra

Virginia breeders Eric and Nancy Rizer and trainer Robbie Bailes enjoy ride with Slam Notion. By Joe Clancy. Page 60

On our cover: Journalism digs in late to capture the Grade 1 Haskell Stakes at New Jersey's Monmouth Park.

Photo by Equi-Photo, Inc.

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Incentive Structure

20% reimbursement of purchase price (with a minimum qualifying purchase of $5,000 and a maximum purchase price of $30,000). Limited reimbursement up to $10,000 to one individual/entity. Program limited to a total of $50,000 for 2026 incentives.

Application Requirements

- **Invoice** from a recognized sales company and proof of payment
- Copy of mare's **registration papers**
- **Vet certificate** confirming the mare is at least 45 days in foal
- Signed **Confirmation of Cover** from farm standing Maryland stallion
- Signed **Commitment to Program Terms** by applicant

Administration & Compliance: The program runs until the end of the 2026 breeding season. Available funds of $50,000 for 2026 applicants. Incentives will be paid on a first come, first served basis. A wait list will be created as fully completed and accepted applications are received in the mail. If a mare aborts or does not get in-foal, eligibility will be retained for the 2026 program if all other criteria are met. Ownership of mare cannot be transferred until program commitments are fulfilled.

Maryland Horse Breeders Association

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**Foal must be eligible to be registered Maryland-bred. **Must be a verified Maryland stallion*

Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

Volume 33, Issue 8

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OCT. 31 – NOV. 1

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SCAN TO NOMINATE

Say It Again

"There was a bedroom and there was a spot in the truck, so here I am."
Photographer Louise Reinagel on why she traveled to Saratoga for the sale with Northview Stallion Station

"Train their minds, not their legs, right?"
Trainer Neil Morris, dispensing wisdom for horsepeople

"We're on to the next big thing. That's the way it works in this business."
Northview Stallion Station's David Wade, turning the page to the Timonium consignment after Saratoga

"It's been fun to watch it and you feel like some sort of connection even if you didn't do very much."
Kim Brette, on the success of Pennsylvania breeder Lizzie Merryman and broodmare Zeezee Zoomzoom (a free horse Brette sourced)

"That's a lot of dollars to remake on the racetrack."
Breeder/owner/trainer Merryman, on the decision to sell a yearling out of Zeezee Zoomzoom for $1.4 million at Saratoga

"He's a great character of a horse. I think a lot of horses could do it. Some don't have the stamina, some aren't good enough and some aren't brave enough. A lot of them never get the opportunity."

TOD MARKS

Trainer Sean McDermott, on the flat/jump versatility (and success) of Maryland-bred Who's Counting

Names of the Month

Public Defender. The Kentucky-bred son of Constitution and On the Backstreets won at Colonial Downs July 23 for owners John Stuart and Peter Bance.

I Like Ike. Bred in Maryland by Johnathan Miller and Elizabeth Thompson, the 4-year-old gelding is a son of V. E. Day. For the history challenged, Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower was the 34th president of the United States after an Army career that included accepting Germany's surrender on V.E. Day at the end of World War II.

Whiteknuckleflyer. Bred in Maryland by Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds and purchased as a yearling by Louis Ulman and Stephen Parker, the 6-year-old mare is out of I Love To Fly. Whiteknucklelfyer won at Presque Isle Downs in July.

Amoudi Bay. Ten Strike Racing's 3-year-old gelding, a winner at Monmouth Park in July, is out of Santorini Moon. He's named after a bay on the Greek island of Santorini, a great spot to watch the sunset.

Bouncer. The 5-year-old gelding, a winner at Laurel Park in late June, is by Adios Charlie.

LAUREL PARK

FALL MEET

SEPTEMBER 2025 STAKES

FIRST RACE 12:10PM

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 6

The Polynesian Stakes - $100,000 Guaranteed
The Twixt Stakes - $100,000 Guaranteed

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 13 TURF FESTIVAL

The Laurel Dash - $100,000 Guaranteed
The Sensible Lady Turf Dash - $100,000 Guaranteed
The All Along Stakes - $100,000 Guaranteed

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 20

The Weather Vane Stakes - $100,000 Guaranteed

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 27

The Laurel Futurity - $150,000 Guaranteed
The Selima Stakes - $150,000 Guaranteed

FOR STAKES DETAILS CONTACT

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WATCH, PLAY & WIN AT LAUREL PARK!

A. AUBREY BODINE

Go Figure

100 Years of the Chincoteauge pony swim and auction in Virginia. The 2025 edition marked the milestone and produced $1,009,100 for the town's volunteer fire company by selling 100 ponies. Suzanne Youngkin, wife of Gov. Glenn Youngkin, bought a foal for $50,000.

5 Mid-Atlantic state breeding programs represented by stakes winners July 19. Book'em Danno (New Jersey), Future Is Now (Maryland), Wolf Hill (Pennsylvania), Thursday Girl (Virginia), Noquestionaboutit (Virginia) and Spotafreeone (West Virginia) all won stakes that day.

1 Mid-Atlantic stallion with a 2025 graded stakes winner through Aug. 12. The venerable Great Notion, 25 years young, has turned the feat twice with Future Is Now, who won the Giant's Causeway and Caress (both Grade 3) in April and July respectively. Northview Stallion Station's son of Elusive Quality passed $3 million in annual progeny earnings for the seventh time (and fifth consecutive).

5 Stakes wins in four weeks (July 12 through Aug. 9) for runners sired by Great Notion. The quintet: Slam Notion, Noquestionaboutit, Future Is Now, Just Philtored and Witty.

10 Wins in the Robert G. Dick Memorial Stakes at Delaware Park for trainer Graham Motion after Marksman Queen (GB) captured the 2025 running July 5. Motion's scores in the turf stakes, first run in 1997, have come with Sopran Basilea (Ire) in 2023, Guilty Twelve in 2017, Real Smart in 2016, Caprice (Ger) in 2009, Rosinka (Ire) in 2007, Alternate in 2004 and 2003, New Economy in 2002 and Bursting Forth in 1999.

THE RACING BIZ

The Independent Voice for Mid-Atlantic Racing and Breeding

Double Crown, retired, "shows the good in racing": Maryland-bred near-millionaire Double Crown has found a soft landing post-racing because, said one of his humans, "a lot of people stepped up." Teresa Genaro gets the story.

"Next part of life is waiting": Veteran jockey Tyler Conner, 31, announced his retirement days after a scary spill at Colonial Downs left him with multiple spinal injuries and numbness in both hands.

10 memorable Haskell Stakes moments: Ted Black provides his 10 memorable moments of Monmouth Park's signature race.

For trainer Kenny Black, a life on the racetrack: Those unfamiliar with Delaware Park racing history may not realize the significance of trainer Kenny Black's presence in the shedrow. He returned to the site of some of his biggest wins in the saddle, where he was the leading rider in 1981. Emily White reports.

Jockey Del Fabbro injured, fundraiser launched: Friends of apprentice jockey Sara Del Fabbro, a Bergamo, Italy, native who earned her first U.S. win earlier this year, are raising funds to help with expenses as she recovers after breaking a leg in a training accident at Delaware Park.

Fast start but "something to prove" for Life Is Daily: Just like his dam, 2015 Cavada heroine Cuppa Mocha Mojo, Life Is Daily is off to a fast start in his career but, per his trainer David Walters, the gelding still has "something to prove," reports Black.

Equi-photo, Inc.

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ALOHA WEST colt o/o FLOTUS MD-bred
BLOFELD colt o/o CLASS E HOLIDAY MD-bred
BLOFELD filly o/o E DUBAI'S HUMOR MD-bred
BLOFELD filly o/o INDIAN SUGAR MD-bred
BLOFELD filly o/o LINEN MD-bred
BLOFELD colt o/o PERFECT LOVER MD-bred
BOURBON COURAGE filly o/o ABOUND PA-bred
BOURBON COURAGE colt o/o MY LITTLE JOSIE MD-bred
CYBERKNIFE colt o/o STARR OF QUALITY MD-bred
DEMARCHELIER (GB) filly o/o BAMBOISELLE (IRE) PA-bred
EPICENTER filly o/o BODE'S CONNECTION KY-bred
FROSTED colt o/o TUNNEL STRIKE MD-bred
GOLDEN LAD filly o/o TAKETHEODDS MD-bred
GREATEST HONOUR filly o/o HOT FUN MD-bred
GREATEST HONOUR colt o/o MISSY RULES MD-bred
IMPROBABLE filly o/o TRIBAL SPY PA-bred
KNOWN AGENDA colt o/o MOON VISION MD-bred
MIND CONTROL filly o/o DRAMA MAMA NY-bred
MOSLER filly o/o SO FAR AWAY MD-bred
OUTWORK filly o/o GOODY TWO SIOUX KY-bred
PINEHURST filly o/o AURA KY-bred
PINEHURST colt o/o CAUSE TO DREAM KY-bred
VEKOMA filly o/o LUNAR RILLE MD-bred
WAR OF WILL filly o/o KEYLIGHT PA-bred
WEIGELIA filly o/o INTO THE EAST PA-bred
YAUPON filly o/o OFF MY STAGE KY-bred

Bill Reightler
AGENT

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Midlantic fall yearling sale ready for September

Turn the page, box up the supplies, pull the manes and get ready to eat crabcakes again. The continuously moving Thoroughbred sale schedule shifts to Timonium, Md., and the annual Fasig-Tipton Midlantic fall yearling sale this month.

The Fair Hill office was still finalizing the catalog, but an early list went 209 yearlings deep in mid-August, fewer than last year when the sale finished with 180 yearlings sold. Slated for Sept. 30, this year's sale will once again showcase a deep group from the Mid-Atlantic and beyond.

Maryland-bred sire Aloha West, who stands at Mill Ridge Farm in Kentucky, will be represented by his first yearlings and put three on the early list. The catalog included 11 yearlings by Blofeld and a dozen from fellow Maryland-based sire Engage. Frosted, sire of 2024 Maryland-bred Horse of the Year Post Time, had 10 in the sale while the region's stallion dean (and leader) Great Notion is represented by 12. Two entrants are by freshman sire Yaupon, off to a strong start at stud.

Northview Stallion Station led all consignors last year with 32 yearlings sold for $811,000, an average of $25,344 per horse. The Chesapeake City, Md., farm returns with another full draft for the Golden family's Sycamore Hall Farm, Thornmar Farm, Two Legends Farm and other clients.

"I've got more than 50 consigned," said Northview's David Wade. "At least in my opinion, we're loaded for bear with the sire lines we're bringing. I was just going through an advertisement today and the sires we're bringing are so strong – Army Mule, Bolt d'Oro, City of Light, Mandaloun, Frosted, Maxfield, Olympiad, Street Sense, Practical Joke . . ."

FASIG-TIPTON PHOTO

Last year's sales topper, at $165,000, was a City of Light filly now named Project Maximus bred by Bowman and Higgins Stable and consigned by Becky Davis, agent.

Plus Northview's own squad of Great Notion, Engage, Galawi (Ire) and Golden Lad.

Northview's highest-priced horse of 2024, a filly now named Share Success, represented the farm on both sides as she was by first-year sire Engage out of the Great Notion mare Stickingtogether. Purchased by Chuck Zacney's Cash Is King stable for $115,000, the dark bay filly was breezing at Laurel Park this summer but had yet to run. Thornmar broodmare Casual Kiss' colt by Midshipman brought $100,000 last year via the Northview consignment. Her half-brother by Great Notion joins the sale this year. They're both half-siblings to Grade 2 winner Still Having Fun and stakes winner Too Many Kisses among others.

Wade believes in taking horses to Timonium who could shine at a smaller sale, as opposed to competing for attention at bigger venues.

Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Fall Yearlings | September 29 & 30

Sire Power!

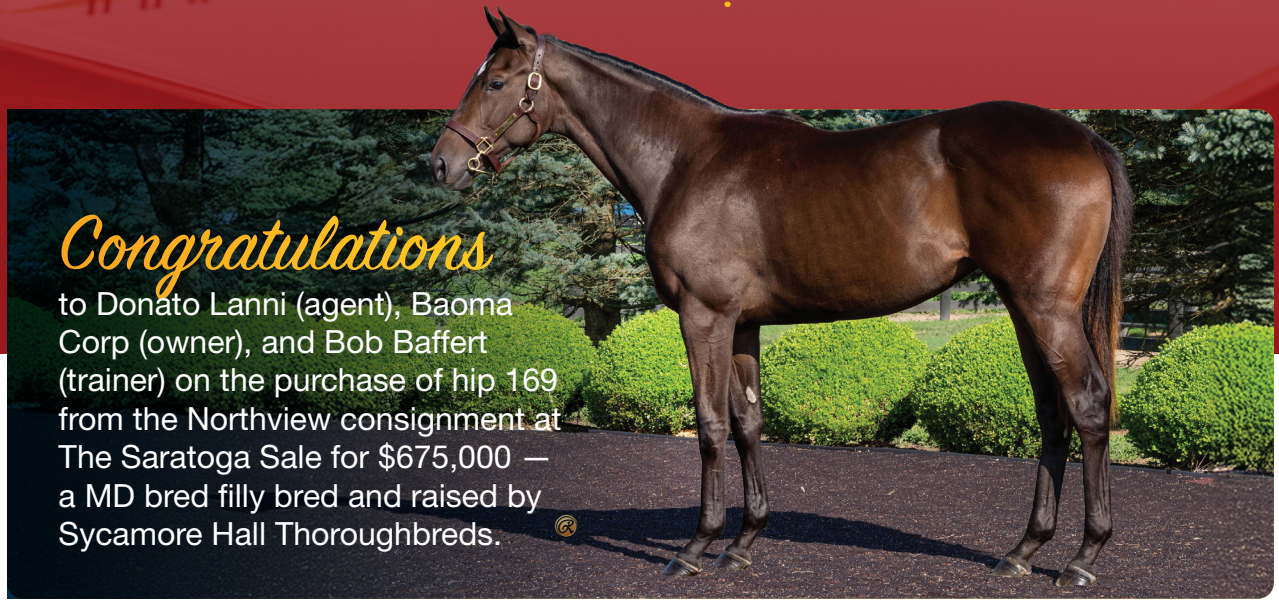
Northview's September lineup features yearlings by the industry's most in-demand stallions.

FEATURING YEARLINGS BY:

Army Mule
Authentic
Blofeld
Bolt d'Oro
Cairo Prince
City of Light
Corniche
Drain the Clock
Frosted
Great Notion
Known Agenda
Mandaloun
Maxfield
Maximum Security
Mystic Guide
Olympiad
Practical Joke
Raging Bull (FR)
Runhappy
Street Sense
Tapwrit
Vino Rosso
Volatile

PLUS INDIVIDUALS BY:

Bourbon Courage
Divining Rod
Engage
Enticed
Friesan Fire
Galawi (IRE)
Golden Lad
Irish War Cry
Mosler
Uncle Lino



Congratulations

to Donato Lanni (agent), Baoma Corp (owner), and Bob Baffert (trainer) on the purchase of hip 169 from the Northview consignment at The Saratoga Sale for $675,000 — a MD bred filly bred and raised by Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds.

Northview STALLION STATION

northviewstallions.com
Northview Stallion Station (David Wade), Agent
55 Northern Dancer Drive, Chesapeake City, MD 21915

"You can take a standout horse there and do well," he said. "I've had consignors tell me we can go there and get six figures for a horse that might not have gotten that in Kentucky. Good horses stand out and there are enough good buyers – regional buyers, national buyers and pinhookers – that look to that sale."

Consignor Becky Davis sold three of the top four last year and has consistently turned out sales-toppers at Timonium, to go along with strong racetrack performances from her graduates. In 2021, she sold future millionaires Post Time ($85,000) and Neecie Marie ($25,000) from the same Timonium consignment. Last year, she sold a Nyquist colt out of Alottalute for $150,000 to pinhooker Dave Scanlon, who got $1 million for the horse in March. Last year's sales-topper, at $165,000, came from the Davis consignment and was entered for her debut at Parx Racing Aug. 20.

The Davis consignment goes 20 deep for 2025, and includes yearlings by Great Notion, Blofeld, Global Campaign, Raging Bull (Fr), Nyquist, Frosted, Street Sense and McKinzie among others. A Street Sense filly is out of Moon Virginia, who produced a $120,000 filly last year. A Frosted filly in the consignment is a half-sister to stakes winner Bawlmer Hon, and the latter's Great Notion filly is also part of the consignment.

Like Wade, Davis likes selling horses in her home state and called the smaller catalog a product of the industry's overall contraction, not a sign of trouble.

"The sale's gotten smaller but everything's gotten smaller," she said. "It's not a reflection on this market necessarily, it's just a reflection on numbers. The whole industry is contracting. I'm still taking really good stuff to the sale. I'm not sending anything to Kentucky, I didn't send anything to Saratoga. I like being the big fish in a smaller, regional sale and buyers can come from anywhere now. You can get your horse out to the big audience without going to Kentucky or Saratoga."

Bill Reightler takes another big consignment to Timonium, including a Cyberknife colt who is a half-brother stakes winner Fulmineo and $775,000 2023 Saratoga yearling Handsintheair.

Gracie Bloodstock brings a 23-strong consignment, including yearlings by Practical Joke, Tacitus, Drain The Clock, Vino Rosso and Frosted.

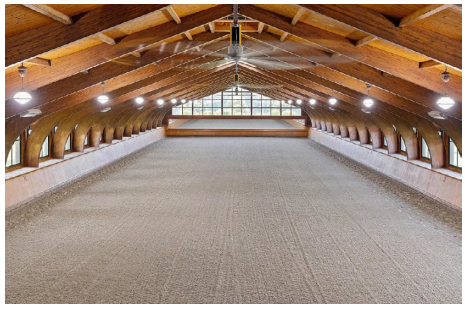
Look for the full catalog and other details at fasigtipton.com.

– Joe Clancy

For Sale – RiverEdge Farm

Chesapeake City, Maryland.

SEE THE VIDEO!



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Complementing the equestrian center is a beautifully appointed 9,000 sq ft, 5 bedroom Georgian-style brick manor home and a luxurious guest home including an enclosed pavilion with a heated indoor pool.

An additional 15-stall center-aisle barn with six-horse Kraft Eurocizer, a fully equipped brick office building, and other operational structures support top-tier equestrian training. RiverEdge has been home to Olympic-level dressage and eventing horses for many years.

The property is co-listed by Patterson Schwartz Land & Farm Division & Monument Sotheby's International Realty.

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Milestones

Inducted

To the Maryland Thoroughbred Hall of Fame, Eclipse Award winner Smart Angle and classic winner Caveat, members of the Ryehill Farm stable in the late 1970s and early 1980s, after a vote by a committee of Maryland racing industry members coordinated by the Maryland Horse Breeders Association and Maryland Racing Media Association. Champion 2-year-old filly of 1979, Smart Angle was

BOB COGLIANESE (2)

Smart Angle's four Grade 1 wins at 2 included the Frizette.

Ryehill's first Eclipse Award winner. In her first dozen starts at 2 and 3, 11 in stakes at seven tracks, she won seven times and was never worse than third. Over a seven-race stretch during her championship season, trainer Woody Stephens sent out the daughter of Quadrangle to six stakes wins, including the Selima, Frizette, Matron and Spinaway, all Grade 1. Jim and Eleanor Ryan purchased Smart Angle's dam Smartaire at the 1972 Keeneland fall sale. Smart Angle was the fourth foal bred by the Ryans out of Smartaire and followed graded stakes winners Quadratic and Smarten. Smart Angle retired in January of her 4-year-old campaign with seven wins, four seconds and a third in 17 starts, for earnings of $414,217. She went on to produce 13 winners from 14 starters, led by graded stakes-winning Maryland-bred champion Houston, a $2.9 million sales yearling by Seattle Slew. The year after Smart Angle's championship season came the birth of the Cannonade colt Caveat. Out of Cold Hearted (by The Axe II), Caveat was also trained by Stephens and campaigned by Jim Ryan, August

Caveat won the Grade 1 Belmont Stakes in 1983.

Belmont IV and Bob Kirkham. Caveat won the 1983 Belmont Stakes-G1 and was third in the Kentucky Derby-G1. A stakes winner on dirt and turf, he made 21 starts in less than a year while competing at 10 tracks. Coverage in the *Maryland Horse* magazine noted, "Probably no other colt in America has thrived on a more demanding schedule. . . Caveat has had more than his share of difficulties. His past performances read like a war record, the words 'bumped,' 'checked' and 'forced wide' appearing often." Caveat was the second of Stephens' record five consecutive Belmont Stakes winners. Retired to stud at Windfields Farm in Chesapeake City, Caveat was Maryland's leading sire four times and one of the best turf sires in the nation. His top runners included Grade 1 turf winners Awad and Ops Smile, Grade 1 Brooklyn Handicap winner Timely Warning, and Pennsylvania Derby-G2 winner Cefis. Ryehill Farm is represented by four Hall of Famers as the 2025 inductees join Grade 1 winner and multimillionaire Awad (2015) and Eclipse Award-winning champion 2-year-old filly of 1980, Heavenly Cause (2020). The Hall of Fame was initiated in 2013 to celebrate state-bred Thoroughbreds and debuted with a class of 12. There are now 38 members. Caveat and Smart Angle join Alma North, Awad, Ben's Cat, Broad Brush, Caesar's Wish, Challedon, Cigar, Concern, Conniver, Dave's Friend, Deputed Testamony, Devil's Bag, El Gran Senor, Find, Gallorette, Heavenly Cause, Jameela, J. O. Tobin, Kauai King, Little Bold John, Politely, Richard's Kid, Safely Kept, Shine Again, Smoke Glacken, Social Outcast, Star de Naskra, Twixt, Vertex, What a Summer and Youth and steeplechasers Elkridge, Good Night Shirt, Jay Trump, Mountain Dew and Tuscalee.

Represented

By his first winners, Virginia freshman stallion Chance It, after 2-year-olds Tosca and Bettinonit won on back-to-back cards at Colonial Downs Aug. 7 and 8. Tosca, a filly out of the Kantharos mare Lirica, got there first – winning a $40,000 Virginia-

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restricted maiden claimer going 5½ furlongs on the dirt. A day later, the colt Bettinonit rallied from fourth early to win a similar race on the turf. Mary Lightner trains both horses and owns Tosca, bred by Shooting Star Thoroughbreds and Billy Ballard. Also the owner of Chance It, Shooting Star owns Bettinonit, bred by Fred Pace. A son of Currency Swap, Chance It stands at Willow Hill Equestrian in Orange. Va., after three seasons in Florida.

Commenced

On July 24, demolition of Pimlico Race Course, by Maryland Stadium Authority construction manager Clark Construction Group. Clark razed barns and outbuildings adjacent to Winner Avenue as the first step on a total rebuild of the Baltimore racetrack. The new Pimlico will become Maryland's home base to Thoroughbred racing, along with a training center at Shamrock Farm in Woodbine. The demolition package was approved by the MSA board of directors and the Maryland Board of Public Works in May. After this year's Preakness Stakes, the operator and all horses moved out of the facility, the Maryland State Archives removed and secured artifacts from the property, and the Stadium Authority and its partners began securing the site by installing temporary fencing, performing pest control, preparing utilities, and conducting abatement as necessary. As part of the project, MSA will develop an exhibition about the history and significance of the Pimlico. The exhibition will use artifacts, oral histories, photographs, salvaged materials, and other appropriate graphics for display in the newly constructed clubhouse and the publicly accessible spaces on the property and its perimeter. A high level demolition schedule is available at mdstad.com. During the demolition and construction process all racing and training will occur at Laurel Park. The 151st Preakness will take place at Laurel and the 152nd Preakness Stakes is expected to return to Pimlico Race Course in 2027.

KIM PRATT

The "Smarty Party" moved to Saratoga as Smarty Jones was inducted into the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame Aug. 1. Pat Chapman (center), who bred and campaigned the Pennsylvania-bred Kentucky Derby/Preakness winner with her late husband Roy "Chappy" Chapman, accepted the Hall of Fame plaque with trainer John Servis (left) and jockey Stewart Elliott.

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MARYLAND-BRED

FUTURE IS NOW, b.m., 2020, Great Notion—Past as Prelude, by Bernardini. B-R. Larry Johnson; O-The Estate of R. Larry Johnson; T-Mike Trombetta. $175,000 Caress S-G3, Saratoga, July 19.

JUST PHILTORED, b.f., 2023, Great Notion—Slow and Steady, by Malibu Moon. B-ZWP Stable & Non Stop Stable; O-Red White & Blue Racing & London Reid Thoroughbreds; T-Mike Trombetta. $100,000 Keswick S, Colonial, Aug. 2.

LIFELOVENLAUGHTER, b.m., 2020, Lemon Drop Kid—Too Foofoo for You, by Freud. B/O-The Elkstone Group (Stuart Grant); T-Mike Trombetta. $100,000 Jameela S, Laurel, June 21.

MALIBU BEAUTY, b.m., 2018, Buffum—Slow and Steady, by Malibu Moon. B-ZWP Stable & Non Stop Stable; O-Elliot Campbell & Gary Capuano; T-Gary Capuano. $160,000 Obeah S, Delaware, June 14.

MINDFRAME, dk.b./br.c., 2021, Constitution—Walk of Stars, by Street Sense. B-R. Larry Johnson; O-Repole Stable & St. Elias Stables; T-Todd Pletcher. $1,000,000 Stephen Foster S-G1, Churchill, June 28.

POST TIME, gr./ro.h., 2020, Frosted—Vielsalm, by Fairbanks. B-Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Bowman, Dr. Brooke Bowman & Milton Higgins III; O-Hillwood Stable; T-Brittany Russell. $125,000 Deputed Testamony S, Laurel, June 28.

ROMEO, dk.b./br.c., 2023, Honor A. P.—Fancy Love, by Not For Love. B-John Davison; O-Joseph Lloyd; T-John Robb. $175,000 Bashford Manor S, Churchill, June 29.

SEISMIC BEAUTY, b.f., 2021, Uncle Mo—Knarsdale, by Medaglia d'Oro. B-2500 Determined Stud; O-MyRacehorse & Peter Leidel; T-Bob Baffert. $400,000 Clement L. Hirsch S-G1, Del Mar, Aug. 2.

SLAM NOTION, b.g., 2022, Great Notion—Balestra, by Grand Slam. B-Eric & Nancy Rizer; O-Eric Rizer; T-W. Robert Bailes. $125,000 Star de Naskra S, Colonial, July 12.

WHENIGETTOHEAVEN, b.g., 2019, Street Magician—Heaven Knows What, by Holy Bull. B-R. Larry Johnson; O-Ken Ramsey; T-Nolan Ramsey. $100,000 Ben's Cat S, Laurel, June 21.

NEW JERSEY-BRED

BOOK'EM DANNO, dk.b./br.g., 2021, Bucchero—Adorabella, by Ghostzapper. B-Gregory J. Kilka & Bright View Farm; O-Atlantic Six Racing; T-Derek Ryan. $400,000 Alfred Vanderbilt S-G2, Saratoga, July 19.

HE'SPUREGOLD, b.g., 2018, Vancouver (Aus)—Smart N Classy, by Smart Strike. B-John Bowers Jr.; O-Roseland Farm Stable (Bowers); T-Kelly Breen. $85,000 Irish War Cry H, Monmouth Park, July 6.

RIDING PRETTY, dk.b./br.f., 2020, Jack Milton—High Renaissance, by Girolamo. B/O-Holly Crest Farm; T-Eddie Owens Jr. $85,000 Jersey Girl H, Monmouth Park, July 5.

PENNSYLVANIA-BRED

CANDY REWARD, b.f., 2021, Warrior's Reward—Unimagineable, by Twirling Candy. B/O-Warrior's Reward; T-Brandon Kulp. $75,000 Princess of Sylmar S, Presque Isle, July 28.

BENOIT PHOTO

Seismic Beauty goes gate-to-wire in Del Mar's Clement L. Hirsch Stakes for her first Grade 1 win and an automatic paid entry into the Breeders' Cup Distaff-G1. The 4-year-old has never been off the board in seven career starts.

CARMELINA, b.f., 2021, Maximus Mischief—Complete St., by St Averil. B-Lillith Boucher; O-Cash is King & LC Racing; T-Robert Reid Jr. $100,000 Unique Bella S, Parx, June 15.

CORINNA, dk.b./br.m., 2019, Point of Entry—Midnight Ramble, by Unbridled's Song. B/O-Michael Moran; T-Michael Matz. $75,000 Lyphard S, Penn National, June 27.

FIERCE AND STRONG, b.g., 2020, Hoppertunity—Doubleclickdamouse, by Point of Entry. B/O-Ultra Championship Racing; T-Michael Salvaggio Jr. $75,000 Alphabet Soup H, Penn National, June 27; $100,000 Wolf Hill S, Monmouth Park, July 6.

HE'S A MESS, dk.b./br.g., 2018, Dramedy—Nightfury, by Kitalpha. B-Eddy & Linda Martinez; O/T-Scooter Davis. $75,000 Hard Spun S, Presque Isle, July 21.

HOUGHTON SHUFFLE, dk.b./br.g., 2020, Medallist—Runs Like L, by Sunday Break (Jpn). B/O-Melissa Houghton; T-Bernie Houghton. $100,000 Page McKenney H, Parx, June 15.

OUR LADY, b.f., 2022, Bolt d'Oro—Summer's Ready, by More Than Ready. B-Blackstone Farm; O-JDLP Holdings; T-Steven Chircop. $75,000 Malvern Rose S, Presque Isle, July 7.

VIRGINIA-BRED

NOQUESTIONABOUTIT, dk.b./br.f., 2022, Great Notion—Magician'squestion, by Street Magician. B-R. Larry Johnson; O-The Estate of R. Larry Johnson; T-Mike Trombetta. $125,000 Glenn Petty S, Colonial, July 19.

REPO ROCKS, dk.b./br.g., 2018, Tapiture—Hawaiian Love, by Not For Love. B-Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin III; O-Double B Racing Stables; T-Jamie Ness. $125,000 Edward P. Evans S, Colonial, July 18.

SHOWSTOPPER COPPER, ch.g., 2021, Air Force Blue—Santin's Anna, by Concord Point. B-Carlos Moore & Gillian Gordon-Moore; O-William Dove II; T-Thomas Lingenfelter. $125,000 Punch Line S, Colonial, July 18.

THURSDAY GIRL, ch.f., 2021, Speightster—Souper Miss, by Alphabet Soup. B-Knockgriffin Farm; O-Timbercreek Racing; T-Brittany Russell. $125,000 Brookmeade S, Colonial, July 19.

WINFINITY, gr./ro.f., 2022, Not This Time—Winter, by Awesome Again. B-Ann Mudge Backer & Smitten Farm; O-Dream Big Racing; T-John Ortiz. $125,000 Miss Disco S, Colonial, July 12.

WEST VIRGINIA-BRED

DUNCAN IDAHO, dk.b./br.h., 2020, Fiber Sonde—Holy Pow Wow, by Indian Charlie. B-John McKee; O-David Raim; T-Jeff Runco. $75,000 It's Only Money S, Charles Town, June 20.

SPOTAFREEONE, dk.b./br.c., 2022, Warrior's Reward—Harbin Ice, by First Dude. B-Newborne Farm; O-John Link; T-Jeff Runco. $75,000 Robert Leavitt S, Charles Town, July 19.

ZIP START, b.f., 2022, Upstart—Dancing for Glory, by Exchange Rate. B-Williams Racing; O-Coleswood Farm Inc. & David Raim; T-Jeff Runco. $75,000 Sylvia Bishop Memorial S, Charles Town, July 26.

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Horses by these stallions, who were conceived in Maryland and fully nominated/certified to the Maryland Million program, are eligible to run in Maryland Million stakes races.

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Alliance
Baltimore Bob
Bandbox
Barbados
Biblical
Blofeld
Bourbon Courage
Buffum
Bullsbay
Cage Fighter
Cal Nation
Cherokee's Boy
Cuba
Dance With Ravens
Deputy Storm
Despite the Odds
Divining Rod
Dortmund
Eclipticalspraline
Editorial
E Dubai
Elusive Charlie
Engage
Etched
First Mondays
Fleet Foot
Force the Pass
Fortune Ticket
Freedom Child
Friesan Fire
Galawi (Ire)
Gandhi
Gators N Bears
Giacomo
Golden Lad
Great Notion
Greek Sun
Hangover Kid
Heaven's Glory (JPN)
Holy Boss
Hoppertunity
Hunters Bay
Imagining
Irish War Cry
Kendalls Bear
Ken Doll
Kobe's Back
La Reine's Terms
Lion Hearted
Long River
Louis Quatorze
Madefromlucky
McKendree
Modern Cowboy
Mojave Moon
Mosler
Nicanor
No Never No More
Norumbega
Not Abroad
Not For Love
Orientate
Outflanker
Pass You Bye Bye
Petionville
Plan
Port Vila (FR)
Private Scandal
Que Man
Rainbow Heir
Redeemed
Rock Slide
Same Day Delivery
Scipion
Seville (GER)
Showing Up
Standing Room Only
Street Magician
Super Ninety Nine
Trial Prep
Tritap
Unbridled Mate
Uncle Lino
Unfettered

The above list shows nominated stallions with horses of racing age. Stallion must have been nominated for the specific year the horse was conceived. Some stallions listed here may not be eligible for every year.

PRE-ENTRY DEADLINE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

$150K Maryland Million Classic* Three-year-olds & up, 1⅛ mi. No Lasix.

$125K Maryland Million Turf* Three-year-olds & up, 1⅛ mi., turf. No Lasix.

$125K Maryland Million Ladies* Fillies & mares, 3-year-olds & up, 1 1/16 mi., turf. No Lasix.

$100K Maryland Million Distaff* Fillies & mares, 3-year-olds & up, 7 fur. No Lasix.

$100K Maryland Million Sprint* 3-year-olds & up, 6 fur. No Lasix.

$100K Maryland Million Lassie* Fillies, 2-year-olds, 6 fur. No Lasix.

$100K Maryland Million Nursery* Two-year-olds, 6 fur. No Lasix.

$100K Maryland Million Turf Sprint* 3-year-olds & up, 5½ fur., turf. No Lasix.

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$40K Maryland Million and/or Registered Maryland-Bred Starter Handicap 3-year-olds & up, who have started for a claiming price of $12,500 or less since October 12, 2024. 7 fur. First preference to Maryland Million-certified horses.

$40K Maryland Million and/or Registered Maryland-Bred Distaff Starter Handicap Fillies and mares, 3-year-olds & up, who have started for a claiming price of $12,500 or less since October 12, 2024. 7 fur. First preference to Maryland Million-certified horses.

*For horses certified to Maryland Million Ltd. Registered Maryland-breds that are not Maryland Million-sired will be able to pre-enter and race ONLY if the race has less than eight (8) Maryland Million-sired entries. SEE PRE-ENTRY BOOK FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

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— Next Chapters —

BY MAGGIE KIMMITT

Gracious Brevity

BARRIE REIGHTLER

Gracious Brevity poses at home, with 10-year-old daughter Christmas Truce looking on.

Call Gracious Brevity an accidental racehorse. Her breeding was planned, carefully, for the hunt field and competitive arenas other than a racetrack.

A deep dive into the 28-year-old mare's pedigree parallels that of owner Jamie Maher's family. The bloodlines – equine and human, harken to a different era. Her late father, attorney Ronald L. Maher Sr., grew up in the Baltimore suburb of Catonsville in what she called "a non-horsey family." Two of 10 children, he and his older brother, Thomas F. Maher Jr., were serious in their equine interests and pursuits.

Maher's mother, Nancy Sehlhorst, grew up in the Guilford area of Baltimore until her parents purchased Harmony Hall in Monkton in the 1940s. An accomplished show rider and foxhunter, she won the Maryland Horse Show Association's D. Sterett Gittings Trophy for horsemanship in 1942.

Meanwhile, young Ron Maher was foxhunting with the Howard County-Iron Bridge Hounds.

"My mother was at the Elkridge-Harford Hunter Trials and had just broken up with someone," Jamie Maher said. "Her vet pointed my father out and said, 'There's a young man you should meet. He's very wealthy and loves horses.' He went to my father and said the same thing to him about my mother. So at the party after the hunter trials, they made a beeline for each other, fell in love, got married, found they both loved horses but neither one had any money."

They settled into life at Harmony Hall.

Thomas Maher bred and owned show hunters ridden frequently to local victories by top rider William "Linky" Smith. Among those was Honey Guide, a mare bred by Augustus Riggs IV and foaled in Maryland in 1953. She was by Grey Coat, a popular sire of hunters, out of Irette (Irish—Reno Lofty, by Cerulean). The "Reno" prefix signifies that Irette's dam was a U.S. Army cavalry remount horse. Honey Guide went to Royal Admiral, a son of Triple Crown winner War Admiral, and the foal, Admiral's Honey, was a 3-year-old in training when Thomas passed away in 1961.

"When my uncle died, Admiral's Honey was part of his estate," Jamie said. "When she came off the track and was for sale, Cappy Smith was buying up all the mares by Royal Admiral because they got such great jumpers."

Morton "Cappy" Smith was a legendary hunter/jumper rider during the 1930s, '40s and '50s with inductions to the Show Jumping Hall of Fame, National Show Hunter Hall of Fame and the Virginia Horse Show Association Hall of Fame. He passed away in 2002.

"Cappy came and looked at Admiral's Honey but said she was way too hot," said Jamie. "She never sold, so my parents got her as part of the estate. My mother started her, and she became a fabulous hunter."

Jamie rode her in the first Maryland Combined Training Association event in 1972, and took her to Pony Club. She had her first foal at 18, and was bred back a few years later, but lost that foal.

Barbara Obre, then owner of Merryland Farm in Hydes, offered the Mahers a breeding to their teaser Well Liked, an unraced son of Jaipur out of the Spy Song mare Spring Tune. The Mahers accepted, and on May 1, 1981, 23-year-old Admiral's Honey foaled a bay filly they named Widow Walk.

Bred to continue the foxhunting line, Widow Walk was shown in hand. She won the Maryland State Fair's Thoroughbred class as a yearling and was named reserve grand champion at Dressage at Devon at 3. She became Jamie's eventing mount, competing to the preliminary level.

Initial attempts at breeding Widow Walk failed, and veterinarians said she had a 50/50 chance of conceiving and an equal probability of carrying a foal. She beat the odds in 1996, delivering a Whatever For filly that April. Determined to try again, Widow Walk was sent to Spencer Young in Virginia right after. He had started several horses for the Mahers and was standing Mokhieba, a son of Damascus out of the Royal Vale mare Court Circuit. The mating worked, and 15-year-old Widow Walk was again in foal.

That Thanksgiving morning, Ron Maher Sr. suffered a fall while hunting with the Elkridge-Harford Hounds. The accident left him a quadriplegic. On May 6, 1997, Widow Walk delivered her Mokhieba foal, a coveted filly, at Young's farm in Virginia.

"When my father was dying, we had that foal and her yearling half-sister," said Jamie. "My mother asked him what we should do with them. He said, 'Let them tell you what to do.' "

Ron passed away July 31, 1997. As his widow prepared for his memorial, she explained her wishes to the minister tasked with the planning.

"So you want a service filled with gracious brevity," he said.

The answer was yes, and Widow Walk's foal had a name.

At the end of her 2-year-old year, she returned to Young in Virginia to be broken.

"He called my mother that spring and said, 'I think she might make a racehorse,' " said Jamie. "And my mother said, 'Huh?' That was never in the plan."

Gracious Brevity went to trainer Ferris Allen at Laurel Park.

"Ferris loved Brevity because she never stopped trying, but the race had to set up for her," said Jamie. "She had one run, and she loved 5 furlongs on the turf. Mom raced her from age 3 to 7."

Allen would have happily taken the mare back for an 8-year-old season, but Nancy Maher told him, "It's Jamie's turn with her now."

After 33 starts, Gracious Brevity retired with a record of 2-9-3 and earnings of $73,158.

Retraining started in spring 2005, concentrating on eventing. She gave foxhunting a go in 2006, but Gracious Brevity had no use for standing around during checks.

> "[Spencer Young] called my mother that spring and said, 'I think she might make a racehorse.' And my mother said, 'Huh?' That was never in the plan."
>
> *– Jamie Maher about the racing career of Gracious Brevity*

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMIE MAHAR

After a five-year career racing on the flat, Gracious Brevity, with Jamie Maher aboard, competed briefly in eventing.

A talented jumper with excellent flat work, she was considered a gifted prospect by several professionals with whom Jamie worked. By that time, however, her career as an operating-room nurse in neural and spine surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital left her with little time to devote to the mare's continued training.

Jamie did make time for the inaugural Totally Thoroughbred Horse Show at Pimlico in 2012. The young daughter of a friend had recently lost her pony, and Gracious Brevity seemed like a perfect stand-in.

"We parked on the track, she got off the trailer quietly, then her head went up, she sniffed the track and her feet started moving," said Jamie. "It was all we could do to get tack on her. I ended up getting on her and finally got her settled enough for the walk class. I was on one side of her and Sara's mother was on the other. And you could see Brevity thinking 'I've gotta be good . . . I've got the kid.' She held it together but her toes started twinkling as soon as Sara got off. She wisely didn't take her in any other classes."

Jamie took over for the walk/trot and a jumper class.

"She was a total idiot with me," Jamie said. "The only time she settled was when she went in the ring for the jumper class. As soon as she saw the jumps she calmed down but came out and immediately jigged, fretted. 'Where's the jockey? Where are my blinkers?' Rodney Jenkins was the judge, and she won that jumping class. I took her home and said I would never do that to her again. She was exhausted."

Not surprisingly, Jamie contemplated breeding the mare to continue that strong female line. All had been durable, sound horses with great minds.

Gracious Brevity was 17 when Jamie and friend Carol Tanzola attended a party at Country Life Farm in 2014. The event included a raffle where guests could win a season to a farm stallion.

"I never win anything," Jamie said.

"We don't ever win anything either," Tanzola replied, "but if we do we'll give you the service because we don't own a mare."

When the ticket was drawn for a season to Friesan Fire, Tanzola's husband Jim had the winner. True to their word, they gave the breeding to Maher.

"Country Life called Brevity the 40-year-old virgin," said Jamie. "They bred her three times and she was not in foal. By then, their breeding shed was closed. In August, my vet came to give fall shots. Something about Brevity was different. I told the vet to check her again to see if she was in foal. She repeated that there was no way she was, but put a glove on and started feeling around. She got this funny look on her face and said, 'I have no idea where this foal was hiding.' "

On May 2, 2015, at Country Life Farm, 18-year-old Gracious Brevity foaled a bay filly officially bred by Jamelia Maher and Mr. and Mrs. James Tanzola. Maher named her Christmas Truce.

"When Brevity was in foal in 2014, that was the 100th anniversary of World War I," said Jamie. "I'd read an article about the Christmas Truce of 1914. It talked about 'a brief moment of grace in a horrible war,' and I thought 'Gracious Brevity . . . Friesan Fire . . . fire . . . war.' So I came up with that for her."

The filly never ran, but was shown in hand. She won a ribbon at the 2016 Maryland Horse Breeders Association yearling show.

"Christmas Truce – we call her Pippa – was going to be my old-age horse," Jamie said. "My plan was to retire, which I did in 2024, and then I was going to do a little dressage and some lower-level eventing, and maybe do a long-format novice level three-day with her. But that is just not going to happen."

A broken shoulder in an auto accident, followed later by back problems and a broken ankle, eventually grounded Jamie. But she still lives at Harmony Hall, honored to continue stewardship of her family's rich legacy.

Gracious Brevity and daughter Christmas Truce are there with her, happy in retirement. ■

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As a close friend of founder Jim McKay he was involved from the introduction of the concept in 1985 until his death in 2012. He was a mentor to writers, horsemen and fans alike, and loved our sport from his early days as a sports writer.

Joe Kelly embodied the character of the unsung hero. He was quiet and unassuming, and never sought personal attention or credit, yet was a role model for many. With this award his memory lives on, and is acknowledged annually on Jim McKay Maryland Million Day.

Your unsung hero candidate should embody characteristics that are valuable, but often go unrewarded. He or she should be honest, hardworking and humble. They should inspire and set a good example through their principles and actions.

To nominate your candidate you can request a nomination form by contacting the Maryland Million Ltd. office – either by phone, 410-252-2100 ext. 129, or e-mail registrar@marylandthoroughbred.com – or go to the Maryland Million website at MarylandMillion.com.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Has demonstrated a particular commitment, impact or contribution to the Thoroughbred industry or equine community in general
- Has been involved in the Thoroughbred industry in Maryland for at least five years

Nominations are due by October 1

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Maryland Million Day
OCTOBER 11, 2025 • LAUREL PARK

— From the editor —

BY JOE CLANCY

Cohen legacy still playing out

Somewhere, in another world, Ben Cohen is chomping on a cigar and telling a story about racing luck. Good, bad, it'll land on you. Cohen owned Baltimore's Pimlico Race Course and a stable of Thoroughbreds good enough to compete on the national stage.

In the 1980s, testifying in the Maryland state legislature about reducing the state's share of the pari-mutuel takeout, he called himself a four-time loser to make his point that track ownership needed to retain a larger share of the wagering taxes. "I bet horses, I breed horses, I race horses and I own a racetrack. And if you guys didn't make me come up from Florida early yesterday, I would have had the triple in the last race at Gulfstream."

Years before that, Pimlico general manager Chick Lang ran by Cohen's office like the place was burning down.

"Where are you going?" Cohen yelled.

"I think there's a fire in the grandstand," Lang replied. "I'm going to meet the firemen."

"Wait, wait, can you hold on a couple minutes?" Cohen said. "I think I'm alive in the double."

As Cohen's grandson, John Davison, said this spring, "That's probably a true story."

So is Davison's tale of selling Romeo for $2,500 as a yearling at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic's fall yearling sale in 2024, then watching him win a stakes and go for $1.7 million at Fasig-Tipton's July sale in Kentucky. Whether you knew him or not, you can almost hear Ben Cohen telling Davison that sometimes stuff like that happens in racing.

The next sentence would be something about not losing faith.

"He had a lot of success, but I think he used the words 'broke even' when he was in his 80s," Davison said in June. "He was a character, had a gruff exterior but if you got to know him, he was a sweet man. He was a wonderful mentor and friend."

Cohen and his brother Herman bought Pimlico in 1952, adding it to interests in Ohio tracks Thistledown and Cranwood Park and Charles Town in West Virginia – all backed by the brothers' success with a building/construction business. Ben Cohen was more than a racetrack owner. He

invested in the other sides of the business as a Thoroughbred owner/breeder and a bettor.

As the story goes, Cohen and his wife Zelda would spend a few weeks in Florida every winter for the warm weather, the social scene and the racing action. One February, he went to a yearling sale and bought two horses, presenting them to Zelda as a Valentine's Day present with a declaration.

"I finally got you a gift you can't return – a colt and a filly."

And just like that, the Cohens were Thoroughbred owners. They won the 1965 Belmont Stakes and Travers Stakes with homebred Hail to All, won major races on big stages with Bet Big, Skip Trial and others, enjoyed a long association with trainer Sonny Hine, and kept horses at their Halycon Farm off Greenspring Avenue.

They passed a love of racing down to daughter Rosalee Davison, who became a breeder and an owner. Her homebred Guilty Conscience won 14 races, topped by the Grade 1 Vosburgh in 1981, and an Eclipse Award as champion sprinter. Hear Us Roar was a homebred Maryland-bred champion. John Davison followed his mother and grandfather into the game. He won stakes as an owner with Mystic Love, bred and raced three-time winner Super Love, pinhooked yearlings to 2-year-olds, and even trained six winners in the 1990s while balancing a career in the family's property-management company.

"In our conference room at the office we have Hail to All's Belmont photo displayed," he said. "It's a wonderful family legacy to have. I'm the one in the family who has kept it going to a third generation like a piece of Americana. My grandfather bought his first horses in 1950 and within 15 years he had bred a classic winner."

And it's all still going, even as Davison rides the ebbs and flows of the Thoroughbred game. Not all pinhooking ventures work. Not all broodmares produce stars. Not all racehorses win. Sometimes, a horse you sell cheap ends up selling for seven figures to a bloodstock agent making multiple big splashes for Libyan clients.

Davison sold Romeo because it made sense given the circumstances – a family he knew plenty about, some negative veterinary reports, and other horses to raise. One, Romeo's half-sister Constituent, didn't live another month.

"She broke down in the second start of her life, fractured her shoulder, that was devastating," Davison said of the daughter of Constitution, who was injured in a Keeneland maiden race in October 2024. "She had a lot of personality and I got a little attached to her. It was heartbreaking. I'll keep a few horses here and there because it's in my blood and I love it, but to be in it fully is very difficult."

His grandfather probably told him that. ■

PETER WINANT'S COLLECTION / MARYLAND HORSE LIBRARY

Success Breeds Success

BATTEN ENJOYS TIE TO JOURNALISM, WHO ADDS HASKELL TO BIG YEAR

By Paul Halloran ■ *Photographs by Equi-Photo, Inc.*

Anyone can respect the grittiness and greatness of Journalism, the consensus second-best 3-year-old horse in training, who may have won the Triple Crown had he not had the misfortune of being foaled the same year as Sovereignty.

Frank Batten can appreciate him more than most.

"I told some of my friends that don't follow horses, this is like my grandchild," Batten said. "It's the best way I know how to describe it. Journalism is like my grandchild."

Batten bred Mopotism and sold her as a weanling for $135,000. A daughter of Uncle Mo out of Peppy Rafaela, Mopotism earned $876,090 in a 26-race career and sold as a broodmare prospect for $1,050,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky select sale in November 2019. She was bred to Curlin and on Feb. 6, 2022, produced her first foal, a colt who brought $825,000 at Fasig-Tipton's 2023 Saratoga select yearling sale.

Two years later, Journalism sandwiched seconds to Sovereignty in the Kentucky Derby-G1 and Belmont Stakes-G1 around a win in the Preakness Stakes-G1. With Sovereignty staying at Saratoga to run in the Jim Dandy-G2 a week later, Journalism was an odds-on favorite in the 59th Haskell Stakes at Monmouth Park in Oceanport, N.J., July 19.

At home in North Carolina, Batten watched with great interest, as always.

"Well, I follow him pretty intensely," said Batten, who bought Peppy Rafaela in foal to Uncle Mo in January 2014, a few days before she delivered Mopotism. "I try to stay up with what's going on. I knew about Journalism since he was born. I have a good friend who works with [breeder] Don Alberto, and he had told me that the foal was looking good. I've been following him since he was a foal. They expected big things out of him."

Journalism tends to make it interesting and the Haskell was no exception. Jockey Umberto Rispoli, who barreled his way through traffic to set up a winning run in the Preakness, found himself second-last down the backstretch, almost 7 lengths off the pace set by longshot Kentucky Outlaw.

Rispoli followed a move on the far turn made by Gosger, whom he had nailed late in the Pimlico stretch, but still had 3 lengths to make up with a furlong remaining, as Gosger and Goal Oriented, the latter sent out by Haskell leading trainer Bob Baffert, were in a head-to-head battle on the inside. The combination of Journalism's turn of foot and elongated strides couldn't be denied and he got up to win by a half-length after 1⅛ miles in 1:48.15. Goal Oriented was a neck back in third.

"Today, coming out of the gate he was upset with the kickback," said Rispoli. "Something was bothering him. He'd never been worried about the kickback before. So on the backside I decided to take him closer to Gosger, and I know the horse was going to take me wherever I want. I tried to keep him engaged going to the quarter pole. Once I pulled the stick out, he responded as a great horse. I got up in time."

The Haskell marked the race debut for Mike McCarthy and Rispoli. Moreover, it was Rispoli's first time riding at Monmouth Park.

"I was a little concerned," McCarthy said about how the race unfolded. "He bounced out of the gate and broke just OK again. He was a little bit farther back than we would have liked going into the first turn. Umberto pulled his stick going through the first turn and kind of gave him a slap and got him up in there. Up the backside he started picking off horses and he came with that long, measured run. It was long and it was steady. I looked at the wire and I looked at Journalism and I looked at the leaders [Gosger and Goal Oriented] and I'm glad we had a couple of extra jumps there to get the job done."

Owned by Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners, Bridlewood Farm, Don Alberto Stable, Robert LaPenta, Elayne Stables Five and the Coolmore partners of Mrs. John Magnier, Michael Tabor and Derrick Smith, Journalism won for the sixth time in nine starts while pushing his career earnings to $3,798,880.

Since a third in his debut in October 2024 at Santa Anita, he has been first or second in eight consecutive races (the Derby and Belmont losses to Sovereignty).

Batten couldn't be prouder.

"That tremendous stride at the end that he puts on is pretty fabulous," said Batten, who bred 2025 Ruthless Stakes winner Volleyballprincess, one of four North Carolina-breds in the 2022 foal crop, according to The Jockey Club statistics. "He has a tremendous kick. That was another tremendous come-on, almost as good as the Preakness. Very powerful. It's been a lot of fun. Never thought I'd have one like that. Not that I have him, but I've been in contact and have been involved with the breeding."

A small-animal veterinarian who bought his first mare in 1985, Batten primarily breeds to sell, but there was no way he was parting with a full-sister to Mopotism. The Todd Pletcher-trained Ruth, foaled in 2022, has won twice in eight starts, and was fourth in the Monmouth Oaks-G3 July 26 – a week after Journalism's Haskell triumph and 11 days after Mopotism died from complications of colic.

Batten bred Peppy Rafaela successfully five other times to Curlin, Animal Kingdom, Distorted Humor, Uncle Mo

Turning for home, Gosger and Goal Oriented (right) are in an all-out battle as Journalism (second left) launches his patented late surge down the center of the track.

and Justify. The most productive of these has been 6-year-old Nabakov, by Uncle Mo, a five-time winner and $250,356 earner. The Animal Kingdom is the North Carolina-foaled filly I B Ok, born in 2016. Winless in three starts, I B Ok produced two foals for Batton, including North Carolina-bred filly Ok by Me (by Laoban), whose latest of three wins came in a claiming race at Colonial Downs July 17. Mopotism's unraced half-sister Micro Start (by Justify) delivered her first foal this year, a colt by 2023 Horse of the Year Cody's Wish. Batten said he will "probably" sell the weanling at the Fasig-Tipton November sale. Micro Start is in foal to Good Magic. Peppy Rafaela died in 2023.

In addition to Ruth, Batten has a 2-year-old colt by Into Mischief out of the unraced Curlin mare Vite, purchased in foal to Constitution in 2020. He will head to Pletcher when ready for the racetrack. Last year, Vite produced a Justify filly Batten said he will race and possibly keep as broodmare prospect. This year, Vite produced a Life Is Good filly and is in foal to Practical Joke. She and Micro Start are Batten's only broodmares at this time.

"I breed them to sell, but if something comes along that isn't conducive for selling, then I will keep them racing," he said. "I purposely did not sell Ruth. She was such a nice horse. She was every bit as nice as Mopotism was. I made the decision not to sell her, which was a difficult decision because everybody likes to cash in once in a while. She would have done very well. But I made the decision to keep her just because I wanted to keep improving my lines and getting better stock."

Synnefias finds graded success

When it comes to training racehorses, Panagiotis "Peter" Synnefias comes from good stock, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Peter Bazeos, and parents Dimitrios and Paulina. With racing roots in Greece, New England and Pennsylvania, Synnefias went out on his own in 2021 at age 22.

Four years later, he became the first graded-stakes winner in the family when **Surface to Air** pulled off a major upset in the Monmouth Cup-G3 on the Haskell undercard, outdueling 1-10 favorite Just a Touch to win by a half-length.

Just a Touch, a $300,000 OBS 2-year-old purchase, was coming off a third in the Met Mile-G1, just in front of 2023 Breeders' Cup Classic-G1 winner White Abarrio. Surface to Air, claimed last year at 4 by Synnefias for $30,000 out of a Keeneland maiden win for Brian Shyda's Premier Stable, entered off a third in the Salvator Mile-G3 at Monmouth.

"It's always fun. I like our team to get challenged by the bigger barns like that," said Synnefias, whose horse vanquished the Brad Cox-trained Just a Touch and Todd Pletcher's Classic Catch. "You like to put yourself up against these guys. We don't

Journalism's large ownership group celebrates in the winner's circle as Umberto Rispoli hoists the Haskell trophy.

always have the best quality horses, so it's fun to be able to take some of these claimers and try to move them up and learn new things about them to get them to where they're at now."

It took Surface to Air 12 starts to break his maiden and when he did, Synnefias won a multiple-trainer shake ("five, six or seven, somewhere around there"). He brought him to New York and won two allowance races before running seventh in last year's Monmouth Cup on three weeks' rest.

"Last year, he was coming off those two wins in New York, so we wanted to give him a shot," Synnefias said. "But it was just a little too quick for him, rushing him into that race, expecting him to run one of his best races against the best horses. It wasn't really ideal for us."

Synnefias gave the son of Midshipman a 5½-month break after running fourth in the Kris Kringle Stakes at Parx on New Year's Eve.

The Salvator Mile proved to be a perfect prep for the Monmouth Cup, a 9-furlong race in which he was fourth after a half-mile, wrested the lead from Just a Touch by the stretch call and then won a prolonged duel in the final sixteenth of a mile under Samuel Marin.

"It was a good race," Synnefias said. "We were able to prepare him correctly for a race like this and we got a good trip. A lot more confidence this year. He had a little time off over the winter. After that, we just took it easy on him and then we got him ready for the Salvator Mile. We weren't happy that we had to run over a sloppy track, but he needed the race. Then we were able to put two more works under his belt. And from there, going into the Monmouth Cup, we were very, very pleased with how he was doing."

There was still the matter of taking on Cox and Pletcher.

"They probably wouldn't even know where I was. Pletcher has always been one of the guys that I've watched really closely and followed my whole life. As a kid getting into the game, he was probably one of my motivations and idols," said Synnefias, who is married [Allie] and has three young children. "We were going in there knowing that the Pletcher horse and the Cox horse were really nice horses. All we could do is just try to have him as ready as he could be. We've always liked this horse a lot and always had a lot of confidence in him. I know if we can prepare him for the race and we have a target to shoot for, he usually doesn't ever disappoint." Surface to Air pushed his career earnings to $532,054 with his fifth win in 21 starts. He's banked $437,600 since joining the Synnefias barn.

For someone who took his first steps at the old Rockingham Park and grew up in the sport at Suffolk Downs and Penn National, having his horse grind out the upset was appropriate.

Surface to Air (left) battles 1-10 favorite Just a Touch to the wire in the Grade 3 Monmouth Cup Stakes to notch his first stakes win, and the first for Monmouth-based trainer Panagiotis Synnefias.

"He's a fighter," said Synnefias, who had two wins, three seconds and a third in 10 starts on Haskell weekend. "When I saw where he was sitting at the half-mile pole, I was very happy. And when he made his move, I was pretty confident. He's already running the race of his life, so I was happy just to see him right there. And then when we got that head in front, just very pleased."

Synnefias was not the only Mid-Atlantic-based trainer to win a stakes on the Haskell card, as Penn National-based Mike Salvaggio Jr.'s **Fierce and Strong** lived up to his name in capturing the listed Wolf Hill Stakes, a 5½-furlong turf sprint. The Pennsylvania-bred gelding, by former Mid-Atlantic sire Hoppertunity, unleashed a furious stretch drive under Tyler Conner to win by 1¾ lengths.

"We cross-entered him at Presque Isle in a Pennsylvania-bred race [Hard Spun Stakes July 21]," Salvaggio said. "And when the past performances came out for Monmouth, I thought we were going to be running at Presque Isle. And then the past performances for the Presque Isle race came out, and I thought he was probably the best horse but the race just did not set up well. We're pretty sure he's better on the turf. And as it turns out, maybe he's better sprinting. So we decided to take a chance on the Monmouth race. And it turned out to be a good decision."

Even though Fierce and Strong had only two horses beaten at the stretch call, the race played out as Salvaggio expected.

"It looked like there was a lot of speed in the race, and that might have played into our hands because we thought we'd sit off of it and hopefully save ground, which is what we did, and then hopefully run down the speed, which is what we did," he said. "He was pretty much where we thought he'd be. Tyler was able to save as much ground as he could and then turning for home, he swung him out."

Fierce and Strong is the first horse bred by Ultra Championship Racing's Ralph Santella, who paid $5,500 for the Virginia-bred Point of Entry filly Doubleclickdamouse as a yearling and, after an injury derailed her racing career, bred her to Hoppertunity.

Salvaggio took over the training of Fierce and Strong from Anthony Farrior after his sixth start. While logging two wins on synthetic, the horse excelled once moved to the turf. The Wolf Hill was his eighth win in 13 starts on the grass.

"He just wasn't living up to his potential on the dirt," Salvaggio said. "Ralph wanted him to run on the turf. And since we have a turf course here [Penn National], and he's PA-bred, I got him. Although Hoppertunity was unproven as a turf sire, Ralph thought this horse was going to run on the turf."

The Wolf Hill win, Fierce and Strong's third in five stakes starts, increased his career earnings to $377,476 heading into

Pennsylvania-bred Fierce and Strong takes his second stakes win in a row when sprinting on the turf in the Wolf Hill Stakes, pulling away from the favorite, last year's winner Nothing Better.

the Marshall Jenney Stakes at Penn National Aug. 15. Salvaggio was pleased to visit the winner's circle on Haskell Day.

"It's always nice when you can win on the big stage," he said. "I give Monmouth credit. I mean, it was amazing. They had such a young crowd there. It was amazing. There were a lot of people there. It was a young crowd, which we need in our game."

Five days after giving Fierce and Strong a perfect ride, Conner suffered a career-ending injury at Colonial Downs.

"Tyler is a good kid," said Salvaggio. "I know his dad [John] really well. It just sends chills down your spine."

SHORE THINGS: Chad Brown won three of the six stakes on Haskell Day, taking the Matchmaker with **Segesta**, the Molly Pitcher with **Randomized** and the United Nations with **Redistricting (GB)** . . . **Flavien Prat** rode in eight races and finished in the top three in all of them. His three wins included stakes scores aboard Randomized and Redistricting. . . The day was a smash success by virtually any metric. The crowd of **41,876** was the largest since Triple Crown winner American Pharoah won the Haskell in 2015. Monmouth broke the all-sources handle record for the third straight year, with **$21,999,962** wagered, according to chairman and CEO Dennis Drazin. "Every year, the goal is to do better than the year before and to set a new record. But this year, it all came together and we were able to accomplish those goals. The place was alive," Drazin said. "I have to give credit to my racing office because they really put together a fantastic card. Packaging the stakes together creates big days, which seems to be the direction of the industry. Haskell Day at Monmouth Park is a tradition. People look forward to it all year long." Drazin said he is pleased with the numbers overall in 2025, despite weather issues (rain on five straight weekends and one heat postponement). Last year, the track handled $212,598,246 for the 50-day meet. Through the first 34 cards this year, the number stood at $147,317,340, on pace for a total handle of more than $216 million . . . A delay in NYRA Bets taking over as the managing vendor of New Jersey's online and mobile pari-mutuel account wagering system for racing has kept 4NJBets and MonmouthBets as the only options for New Jersey residents to bet the races online. Drazin said that was due to an illness of one of the state regulators and he hopes the new system, which will allow for other advance deposit wagering platforms, is in place by the Breeders' Cup. Monmouth was also scheduled to open a new Caesars Sports Book facility on the property by the beginning of the NFL season. "With the explosion of sports betting and everybody, including the younger demographic, having it on their phones, expanding so that other ADWs and sportsbooks and casinos can enter the market, you will probably have 20 times the amount of eyes on the product, with an opportunity to wager," Drazin said. ■

ECLIPSE SPORTSWIRE

Fade to Black

UNPARALLELED TRAINER LUKAS LEFT MARK ON RACING, REGION

By Vinnie Perrone

The morning he called Pimlico Race Course his salvation, D. Wayne Lukas admired the chestnut redeemer head-bobbing in a stall and said, "If they ever make a movie about all this . . . "

The colt neighed with vigor. "Don't worry," Lukas shouted on cue. "You'll get top billing."

Tabasco Cat, protagonist of the 1994 Preakness Stakes-G1 the day before, had delivered Lukas from a strange, dark place. There, in chilly sunshine by the Pimlico stakes barn, Thoroughbred racing's matinee idol spun new soliloquies with old flair. He mentioned the movie, then proceeded as if the groundwork for a pitch sufficed.

On June 29, 2025, Darrell Wayne Lukas died a legend. Familiar and inscrutable. Gregarious and headstrong. Near and distant. Accommodating and rigid. Easy and intense. A visitor at home in Maryland. For any eager screenwriter, the character and his story presented no shortage of material.

Logline: A Wisconsin farm boy abandons a career as high-school teacher and basketball coach and transforms the sport of Thoroughbred racing, Maryland playing an outsized role in his triumphs and travails.

Synopsis: D. Wayne Lukas, a milkman's son, bottles bold ambition and homespun charm and delivers racing eminence as a Hall of Fame trainer. Driven by epic feats in California,

Kentucky and New York, his unlikely narrative weaves deeper through the Mid-Atlantic, chiefly Maryland, suffusing Lukas' saga with themes of hope, despair and revival.

The Setup

The coach who left the hardwood for the turf keeps his playbook open and his means intact: Recruit top talent, espouse team chemistry, outclass the competition. True to his roots, Lukas changed the racing game. The scoreboards proved it.

From the beginning, horses intrigued him. As a kid, he marveled how his father's carthorse seemed to know the milk route with scant prodding. At public sales for mysterious horses of unknown breed, Mr. Lukas implored auctioneers to forgive Wayne's age and accept his bids, father and son teaming to retrain and resell their acquisitions or donate them to riding academies.

Young Lukas raced his pony, the gray mare Queenie, into his teens in Antigo, Wis., his commitment renewed after he managed bachelor's and master's degrees in education from the University of Wisconsin. During a seven-year run as teacher and basketball coach at Logan High in LaCrosse, Wis., Lukas determined that folks notice and respect the well-dressed man. He upgraded his wardrobe accordingly.

He landed summer work training Quarter Horses at Park Jefferson, a crude, quarter-mile track in the southeast corner of South Dakota. Given a nondescript barn in a desolate outpost, he dressed his stable in flowers and plants and revealed neatly raked shedrows, priorities he'd never abandon.

Racing moved him, as did a thought: A winning trainer could make more money than a seasoned schoolteacher. In the late 1960s, he began training full-time in Ohio, then California.

Lukas proceeded with dash, training 24 Quarter Horse champions in a decade. On drives through Arcadia, he heard Santa Anita Park whisper invitations. He became a devoted Thoroughbred trainer at age 42 and got to hamming for the camera two years later, 1980, when Codex delivered the first of seven Preakness scores.

By prize money, Lukas' national championship seasons spanned 1983 through 1997 with one uncomfortable exception. First Thoroughbred trainer to reach $100 million in purses. First to reach $200 million.

"It's a nice way of keeping score," he said of the breakthroughs. "If this keeps going, when they're drinking coffee someday and somebody asks, 'Who holds all the records?' nobody'll stammer."

First to sweep a Triple Crown with different horses. Only trainer to win six consecutive Triple Crown races. Mentor to Todd Pletcher, Dallas Stewart, Mike Maker, George Weaver, Mark Hennig, Kiaran McLaughlin.

The 1984 creation of the Breeders' Cup urged Lukas' ascent and fattened his purse hauls: His horses won two Cup races in '85, '86 and '87 and three in '88. Four Kentucky Derbies. Four Belmonts. Monmouth Park's Sapling eight of 12 years. Four Monmouth Oaks. Three Horses of the Year, 25 divisional champions, four Eclipse Awards as outstanding trainer.

The face of racing wore a toothy smile, aviator shades, a cowboy hat and jeans that seemed freshly laundered despite a 3:30 a.m. start every workday. In a game dressed in dirt and mud, there stood Mr. Clean, like he had at Park Jefferson, only now feeding quips and profundities like Will Rogers with a coat of polish. He tabbed morning workouts astride a pony.

For Lukas, the summer of 1987 brimmed with Mid-Atlantic implications. His stable vast and overspilling in California, Kentucky and New York, he sent 40 horses to Monmouth Park. Then-president Bob Kulina called it "a big deal" that "legitimized" the New Jersey track.

That July, Lukas went shopping at Keeneland and turned the racing press atwitter. He became so vitalized by Houston, a Maryland-bred yearling colt by Seattle Slew from Eclipse Award winner Smart Angle (by Quadrangle), that he cued the gavel at $2.9 million without a partner or the ready means to pay.

Lukas' nonstop flight to Houston didn't surprise Bill Reightler, then manager of Eleanor Ryan's Ross Valley Farm in Baltimore County. Reightler had aided Houston's foaling, overseen his growth and attended the sale specifically for Hip 251.

"He had this powerful, impeccably balanced body, and he was very correct in his conformation," Reightler said. "He really had the presence and the class."

Lukas attended the auction with Texas oil and gas man L.R. "Bob" French Jr., who'd campaigned juvenile champion Capote and distinguished mare Terlingua. But neither French nor Lukas' other rich clients signed the sales ticket; the trainer did. Exactly how he'd afford the second-most-expensive yearling of '87, Lukas wasn't sure, but he had three weeks to find a way and one immutable reason to try.

"Once in a while," he said, "I see a horse that makes my heart beat a little faster."

As Lukas contemplated payment options, most all of them extreme, French offered to buy a majority interest in the

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Trainer D. Wayne Lukas hangs on to Winning Colors, his first Kentucky Derby winner, in the Preakness paddock in 1988.

colt. Lukas accepted and, in typical fashion, retained a stake. French, per his custom, named the colt for a Texas town.

Morning dress rehearsals depicted a budding star, and Houston backed the talk, winning his juvenile debut at Belmont Park, an allowance at Hollywood (defeating Charlie Whittingham-trained Sunday Silence) and a laugher in the Grade 2 Bay Shore at Aqueduct, his 10½-length score still the greatest in 48 editions. "He might be the best 3-year-old I ever rode," jockey Laffit Pincay Jr. said.

Houston followed with victories in the Derby Trial and King's Bishop, both Grade 3s, but the two-turn Santa Anita and Kentucky derbies and Preakness proved one turn too many. Two off-the-board efforts at 4 and chronic leg issues bought Houston a ticket to stud duty in Kentucky, then California, with a record of 11-5-1-0 and $240,632. He sired 13 stakes winners.

As Houston departed, Criminal Type advanced. Lukas placed the Alydar-sired Calumet Farm homebred in Maryland's first million-dollar race, the 1990 Pimlico Special-G1. After Criminal Type reached the wire a neck before Ruhlmann in track-record time, Pimlico president Joe De Francis thanked Lukas for making the trip. "He looked at me and smiled and said, 'Joe, you keep hangin' up those zeroes, I'll keep showin' up.' "

Lukas' cachet with horses and quotes brought De Francis to lead six corporate bigwigs toward the Pimlico Stakes barn the morning before the 1990 Preakness. Lukas didn't see them coming. He didn't need to.

Flashback to 1985: Garden State Park owner Robert Brennan challenged the Triple Crown by offering a $2 million bonus to any 3-year-old winner of the Cherry Hill Mile, Kentucky Derby and Jersey Derby. After Spend a Buck swept the series and claimed the prize, Churchill Downs, the Maryland Jockey Club and New York Racing Association formed Triple Crown Productions. Chrysler, as major corporate sponsor, offered $5 million to any Triple Crown winner.

Pimlico owner Frank De Francis had driven the venture; Joseph Campana, Chrysler's pro-racing marketing executive,

> "These guys are laughin', slappin' each other on the back. He had them eating out of the palm of his hand. I mean, they floated out of the stakes barn."
>
> *– Joe De Francis, about Lukas entertaining executives from Chrysler*

embraced it. By the spring of '90, however, De Francis had died and Campana accepted a new position. While Joe De Francis succeeded his father at Pimlico with commitment to the partnership, Campana's successors at Chrysler had misgivings.

Hence, Joe De Francis' walk to the stakes barn early on Black-Eyed Susan Day. There, at the west end of the barn, Lukas sat in his customary director's chair, the perfect prop.

"I kind of catch his eye . . . and gave him a quick thumbnail what was goin' on," De Francis said. He nodded toward the Chrysler brass. "I told him, 'They're undecided about whether or not they're gonna keep the sponsorship goin'. Can you entertain 'em for a minute or two?'

"Wayne, he held court for an hour. He was tellin' stories. These guys are laughin', slappin' each other on the back. He had them eating out of the palm of his hand. I mean, they floated out of the stakes barn. He was just as clever and glib and charming and smart a guy as you could possibly want. He didn't have to take an hour of his time and expend a lot of energy entertaining these guys, but he knew it would have been good for the Triple Crown and for the sport."

Chrysler remained chief sponsor six more years, until VISA took over.

The Conflict

The week of the 1988 Preakness Stakes, after Lukas and Winning Colors arrived in Baltimore, the redolent Pimlico air pulsed sour. Winning Colors had set the pace and barely braved onrushing Forty Niner as the third filly to win the Kentucky Derby. Woody Stephens, Forty Niner's Hall of Fame trainer, assured reporters that she wouldn't steal the Preakness, the words conveyed without a smile.

For his Belmont Stakes spree that ended 1986, Stephens had received from NYRA a commemorative wristwatch that became a symbol of his distaste for Lukas. Stephens would display his timepiece and say, "See this watch? The only way Lukas is going to get one is if I leave it to him in my will. Five Belmonts in a row. Who's ever going to beat that?"

The old, accomplished, confident, quotable trainer lobbed a salvo toward the young accomplished, confident, quotable trainer. Winning Colors, Stephens promised, would not enjoy such a carefree Preakness, whatever the cost. "We may finish last," he said, "but she'll finish next to last."

As Preakness Day drew closer, histrionics expanded. Trainer Louie Roussel III agonized about Risen Star's readiness to race again following his third in the Derby. Roussel's theatrical indecision, expressed daily if not hourly, prompted someone to quip, "You probably shouldn't audition for Let's Make A Deal."

Preakness morning, Frank De Francis persuaded Roussel to run. Preakness afternoon, Lukas told jockey Gary Stevens to expect Forty Niner (post four) to float Winning Colors (post five) wide on the first turn. Minutes later, Pat Day hustled Forty Niner to a slight lead, Winning Colors pinned to his right flank. Through and beyond the clubhouse turn, Day kept his mount well outside, presenting a rail invitation Eddie Delahoussaye accepted aboard Risen Star.

"When we turned down the backside, we were probably eight or nine paths off the rail," Stevens said. "I'd never seen Pat ride like that."

Day defended his tactics, saying, "My instructions were to get [Forty Niner] out of the gate fast and entertain the filly early."

A furlong from the wire, Day and Stevens shared a vantage point. Each could see Risen Star striding free, the first of Secretariat's offspring to win a classic. Winning Colors finished third, Forty Niner seventh.

Lukas acknowledged that a contract of sorts had been placed on Winning Colors and a figurative shot taken at her, but he hastened to commend the Risen Star stable. Five years later, he spoke in sharply different tones.

In 1993, Lukas sent Mineral Wells to Laurel Park in hopes of rejuvenating the Mr. Prospector colt. Another Maryland-bred from Ross Valley Farm, out of multiple stakes-winning mare Lantana Lady (by Vice Regent), the $500,000 yearling had won his first four starts for William T. Young's Overbrook Farm. After two subpar starts to finish his 3-year-old season and a stakes-race third at 4, he faced the General George Stakes, then a bona-fide Grade 2. Off at 3-1, Mineral

LYDIA A. WILLIAMS

D. Wayne Lukas buttons up classic hopeful Tabasco Cat in 1994. They won that year's Preakness and Belmont.

Wells lagged under Chris Antley, broke both sesamoids in his right fore, fell and took his last breaths on Laurel's far turn.

The victory by local upstart Majesty's Turn, trained by Luigi Gino and ridden by Alberto Delgado, helped defuse the gloom at the quarter pole. The Preakness three months later would allow no such diversion.

Union City had finished 15th in the Kentucky Derby without incident, but Lukas insisted the colt Preakness worthy even as a two-other-than allowance candidate. Skepticism mushroomed three days before the race when Union City never made it to the racetrack, stoking questions of soundness.

Lukas turned combative. Union City had trained nine straight days post-Derby, he said, and deserved a breather. He called the soundness innuendo "ridiculous" and added, testily, "Every . . . time we have to stop and take a day off on a horse, if it's being questioned, we'd better get out of the business and leave the training to you [reporters]. That's just stupid."

Lukas hadn't won a Grade 1 stakes in 19 months. He'd taken a financial hit from Calumet Farm's pending bankruptcy, from deadbeat owners, from the death by laminitis of his co-owned Grand Canyon, a million-dollar winner at 2. Was he pressing? Desperate? Absent a Triple Crown winner, Chrysler offered $1 million to the 3-year-old with the most points, based on finish, for the three races.

Union City hadn't made it through the backstretch when a compound fracture brought his end.

More solemn than contentious, Lukas said afterward, "We went over him top to bottom after the Kentucky Derby, and he was perfect. We checked him every way we could. He was fine. It was just one of those things . . . a bad step. They do it. It happens every day."

David Zipf, then the state veterinarian, said he twice inspected Union City, watched him jog the shedrow and gallop during Preakness warmups. "He looked good," Zipf said. "He looked sound."

After Preakness winner Prairie Bayou broke down fatally three weeks later in the Belmont, and trainer Tom Bohannan grieved the lost gelding, the inevitable question carried: Did the million-dollar bonus invite undue risks by horsemen?

LYDIA A. WILLIAMS

D. Wayne Lukas leads Oxbow and Gary Stevens to the winner's circle after the 2013 Preakness.

Reporters who'd covered the '85 Triple Crown recalled that Tank's Prospect, Lukas' second Preakness winner, appeared unsound before the Belmont Stakes, broke down in the homestretch and resigned to stud. That was Spend a Buck's marquee 3-year-old season; the Triple Crown bonus hadn't been established.

While Lukas defended his methods and principles, he acknowledged one perceptible change. A once-enchanted press approached him as "a pack of wolves on a wounded deer."

The trials of 1993 consumed him. Into December, Lukas-trained runners had barely earned $4 million; they'd surpassed $10 million each of the previous eight years. Then, mid-month, woe bowed to tragedy. Lukas heard a commotion outside his Santa Anita barn, looked out and saw a horse running loose and son Jeff, his chief assistant, lying on the hardtop.

The Resolution

Tabasco Cat, a peppery 2-year-old stakes winner, had freed himself following a workout, toppled Jeff like a bowling pin and galloped off. Stablehands pursued the colt; Wayne knelt beside his still and blank-eyed son. The first paramedics on the scene assessed Jeff's survival chances and scrapped the ambulance for a helicopter.

Surgeons acted to reduce brain swelling, the effects slow but traceable. Jeff didn't regain consciousness for two weeks, didn't speak for a month, didn't walk for six weeks. Chronic cognitive and neurological problems kept him home in California that spring of '94; he watched Tabasco Cat warm up for the Preakness Stakes with no memory of the mishap. (He never fully recovered and died in 2016 at age 58.)

Wayne reportedly told his crew to show no anger toward Tabasco Cat for what he did, to treat the colt well, to stay positive.

Sixth in the Derby, they'd arrived at Pimlico, uncharacteristically, only three days before the race, perceived as a bid to limit arctic media exposure. Then Tabasco Cat brought the ice to melt.

The *Washington Post* Preakness wrap-up thus began: Tabasco Cat revived the career of trainer Wayne Lukas today, five months after he almost killed Lukas' son.

Again, Lukas had found redemption in Maryland. And Tabasco Cat had sweetened the homecoming for aluminum scion David P. Reynolds, who owned and bred Tabasco Cat with W.T. Young. For years, Reynolds stabled a string of horses with trainer Ron Alfano in Maryland and stood prominent stallion Lord Gaylord and boarded broodmares at Duck and Glennie Martin's Worthington Farms in Baltimore County.

Per his arrangement with Young, Reynolds had sent his stakes-placed mare Barbicue Sauce (by Sauce Boat) to the illustrious Kentucky stallion Storm Cat. In time, The Jockey Club acknowledged its error in approving the resultant colt's name, Tabasco being a registered trade name. Tabasco Cat piqued the lapse when again he passed Kentucky Derby winner Go for Gin late to win the Belmont Stakes.

The Lukas renaissance was just unfolding. The following spring, little Thunder Gulch won the Derby, yielded to rangy stablemate Timber Country in the Preakness, took the Belmont. No stable had won the spring's three classics with different horses.

In deed and in word, D. Wayne Lukas stood restored, master of two turns and one-liners. "He's a small potato," he said of Thunder Gulch, "but tough to peel." The press tittered.

Intent on running his Triple Crown streak to six in the '96 Derby, Lukas sent five horses to Louisville, a task requir-

ECLIPSE SPORTSWIRE

Hall of Fame trainers, and raconteurs, D. Wayne Lukas (right) and Bob Baffert swapped stories, one more time, at Pimlico's 2025 Alibi Breakfast before the Preakness Stakes.

ing 28 employees. Labor underscored the outcome, Young's Grindstone rallying from 15th to edge Cavonnier by a whisker and deny Bob Baffert a first classic victory. (Lukas' run ended in Louis Quatorze's Preakness, Editor's Note finishing third.)

The Grindstone-Cavonnier mirror image at the Churchill wire foretold a growing symbiosis between Lukas and Baffert. Baffert deemed the Triple Crown series a crucible and recognized how Lukas steeled his well-bred 3-year-olds with rigorous training. Baffert put the philosophy to work and won the 1997 Derby and Preakness with Silver Charm. His reign had begun.

Around the Pimlico stakes barn, former hospitality liaison Melanie Martin said, Baffert's clear regard for Lukas spanned the decades. "Bob really looked up to Wayne and listened to what Wayne said," Martin said. "Wayne was a true mentor in that way."

Lukas stood out in other ways, she said. When the horses arrived Preakness week, Lukas would ride the trailer with them, oversee unloading and stall setups, unfold his director's chair to behold the lineup. Without asking, Martin would greet him with cans of iced tea in an ice bucket.

"His help was all so appreciative," she said. "And he was so appreciative. He used to tell me . . . 'When I go back to Kentucky, I tell those bigshots there they need to come up here and watch how YOU do this. We need to treat our people that way.'"

If it had been an act, Pimlico horsemen's director Phoebe Hayes said, Lukas wouldn't have willfully preserved the humerous traditions of the Alibi Breakfast nor called her monthly to glean the latest doings at the Maryland Jockey Club. The day he arrived in Hot Springs, Ark., for the Oaklawn Park meet last December, Hayes said, Lukas phoned without typical jollity.

Lukas: Phoebe, is Pimlico still standing?

Hayes: Um, it was there yesterday.

Lukas: Because they're all tellin' me that it's being torn down now.

Hayes [chuckling]: I don't think so, Wayne. I'll double-check.

ECLIPSE SPORTSWIRE

The Career of D. Wayne Lukas

Starts	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*Earnings*
30,439	4,953	4,254	3,809	$300,548,290

Hall of Fame: 1999
Eclipse Award as Outstanding Trainer: 1985, 1986, 1987, 1994
Eclipse Award of Merit: 2013
Kentucky Derby wins: 4
Preakness Stakes wins: 7
Belmont Stakes wins: 4
Breeders' Cup wins: 20

MID-ATLANTIC HORSES

Open Mind: New Jersey-bred. Champion 2-year-old filly 1988, champion 3-year-old filly 1989. Hall of Fame 2011. Leading New Jersey-bred earner of all-time
High Yield: Pennsylvania-bred Grade 1 winner
Sharp Dance: Virginia-bred Grade 1 winner
Houston: Maryland-bred. $2.9 million yearling purchase, Grade 2 winner
Dance Floor: New Jersey-bred Grade 2 winner, third in Kentucky Derby

MAJOR MID-ATLANTIC WINS

Preakness: Codex, 1980; Tank's Prospect, 1985; Tabasco Cat, 1994; Timber Country, 1995; Charismatic, 1999; Oxbow, 2013; Seize the Grey, 2024
Haskell: Serena's Song, 1995. One of only two fillies to win.
Pimlico Special: Criminal Type, 1990; Farma Way, 1991
Pennsylvania Derby: Seize the Grey, 2024; Will Take Charge, 2013
Monmouth Oaks: Life's Magic, 1984; Without Feathers, 1987; Spain, 2000; Magic Storm, 2002
Delaware Handicap: With a Wink, 1994
Dixie: Skyring, 2013
Iselin Handicap: Roo Art, 1986; Bordeaux Bob, 1987
Frank J. De Francis Memorial Dash: Yes It's True, 1999
Black-Eyed Susan: Lucky Lucky Lucky, 1984; Family Style, 1986; Imaginary Lady, 1989; Serena's Song, 1995
Sapling: Tejano, 1987; Carson City, 1989; Deposit Ticket, 1990; Big Sur, 1991; Boone's Mill, 1994; Hennessy, 1995; Double Honor, 1997; Yes It's True, 1998
Sorority: Tiltalating, 1984; Blue Jean Baby, 1987
Barbara Fritchie: Bara Lass, 1984
Molly Pitcher: Lady's Secret, 1986
Caesar's International: Steinlen (GB), 1990
Meadowlands Cup Handicap: Twilight Agenda, 1991
Maryland Sprint Handicap: Commanche Trail, 1995; Yes It's True, 1999; Snow Ridge, 2002; Hamazing Destiny, 2012
Jersey Derby: Dynaformer, 1988
Salvator Mile Handicap: Slew City Slew, 1988; Shy Tom, 1990
John B. Campbell Handicap: Imp Society, 1985

Lukas: Thanks. You'll ease my mind."

Hayes continued. "In my early career in racing, Wayne was a god, and to be on a first-name basis with somebody like Wayne is extraordinary," she said. "It still puts me in awe. I actually miss him every day."

In 2013, after Oxbow became Lukas' sixth Preakness winner, Pimlico held a reception and presented the trainer a ceremonial cake. As Lukas carved the first slice, his girlfriend turned to Martin and whispered, "Practice for a wedding cake." They giggled. Before year's end, Laurie Lynn Lukas would become Wayne's fifth wife.

That July, retired trainer Dennis Heard attended the Haskell Stakes-G1 at Monmouth and spied Lukas prerace. "It was a funny thing – everyone noticed that he didn't dress up," Heard said. "And the horse broke down past the finish line" after running fourth.

He quickly added, "Say what you want about Lukas – the guy carried the game. Like Baffert, or Baffert like him, they've always been tough on horses. Never babied them. And they got the best out of them."

Former Maryland Jockey Club CEO Joe De Francis, an animal-welfare advocate with board positions with the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority and the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, diplomatically cited Lukas' training evolution.

"I think Wayne had a true and abiding love for the horses and passion for the animals," he said. "I think he was a very aggressive guy. In terms of how hard to push a horse to get him to be able to succeed to his maximum genetic capability, it's not an exact science . . . As he aged, I think he came to find that, perhaps, being a little less aggressive was probably better."

Into his 80s, Lukas neither apologized for his tactics nor forgot them. In 2016, Reightler walked up to the Pimlico stakes barn with a question he'd pocketed nearly 30 years. Reightler introduced himself, mentioned his connection to Houston, and asked Lukas what, if anything, he remembered of the acquisition.

Reightler said Lukas beamed, then recounted particulars with unchecked verve and stunning clarity. After he and Bob French had inspected yearling candidates, Lukas told Reightler, French suggested they buy three colts for $500,000 apiece. "I know you want the Seattle Slew colt," French advised, "but you can't afford him."

"That would be fine," Lukas responded, "but those three will be chasing the Seattle Slew colt around the racetrack."

Two weeks later, French asked Lukas by phone about the transaction status. Lukas told him bankers were appraising his Oklahoma ranch for loan collateral. Stop right there, French said. I'll buy the colt.

"He told that story like it was stuck in his head," Reightler said. "And he recalled everything verbatim, with the same confidence he had the night of the sale. He was willing to risk it all to buy what he thought was gonna be a terrific horse. He was great for the game."

At 88, Lukas used a walking stick at Pimlico in 2024 and still managed a seat atop his pony. After Seize the Grey delivered the trainer's seventh Preakness victory, trackside poets reworked a well-worn verse: Wayne Off The Plane had become The Old Man Off The Van.

"It never gets old at this level," Lukas said.

The game stayed light, but the days got heavy. Taking American Promise to the Preakness this year seemed for Lukas an unusual burden.

"I noticed he wasn't feeling well when he was there," Martin said. "The morning after they shipped in, he didn't come into the track, which was very odd. And after the races this year, when I brought him back, he went straight to his car; he didn't even go the barn to check on the horses. So I just knew."

On June 22, reports emerged that Lukas had been hospitalized with MRSA, a dangerous bacterial infection. He died a week later at 89.

Melanie and her husband, retired trainer Dennis Martin, had made it to this year's Derby, stopped by the Lukas barn, got the typical warm welcome. "Everything that he was, he was just so down to earth," Martin said. "He didn't say no to anybody."

And so she asked, "Don't you have a big birthday comin' up this September?"

Lukas: Yeah, I do.

Martin: Do you remember what you told me about five years ago?

Lukas: Oh, who knows Melanie? What did I tell ya?

Martin: About when you're gonna retire. You said 90 seems like a good number.

She continued. "He laughed, and he looked at me and said, 'I lied.' Either he knew that he was gonna go on, or his time was numbered. You don't know."

The morning after Tabasco Cat won the Preakness, and Lukas called Pimlico his salvation and teased the movie, he spoke a line worthy of a closing shot. Every racehorse, he says, presents a thrilling mystery waiting to be solved. The face of racing, eyes hidden behind dark shades, says nothing about himself before the screen goes black and the credits roll. ■

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37 days old
Bred by Mill Creek Farm

F. o/o **Sadie's Song**
36 days old
Bred by McConnell Racing

F. o/o **No Hayne No Gayne**
54 days old
Bred Mill Creek Farm & Fortune Farm

F. o/o **Sea Gazer**
32 days old
Bred by Scott Miller

F. o/o **Whisper to Mama**
44 days old
Bred by Amsterdam Two Farm

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The Steeplechase Times

Summer Session

SARATOGA, COLONIAL DOWNS HOST JUMPERS FOR LENGTHY STAYS

Mid-Atlantic jump-racing outfits got on the road to New York's Saratoga Race Course and Virginia's Colonial Downs over the summer with lucrative and historic opportunities at the two racetracks.

The Grade 1 A.P. Smithwick Memorial highlighted July in Saratoga, which also carded the restricted Jonathan Kiser Stakes and an allowance hurdle through Aug. 12. Nearly 600 miles south, Colonial Downs continued its extended commitment with two days in July and one in early August. Both tracks were slated to continue into mid-September before the schedule shifted to traditional venues at race meets in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia and South Carolina.

The Saratoga Report

"Not life threatening."

In those three words, Keri Brion offered the best news in the worst moment. The trainer stood in the middle of the Saratoga main track with a phone in one hand and a sport in the other.

"He's going to be OK," she said, relaying the message from her assistant Aisling Carroll.

And that was the best news.

A stride before winning the Jonathan Kiser Memorial July 16, Blue Creek shortened his tempo and Stephen Mulqueen pulled up the 4-year-old gelding along the outside hedge of the inner turf. Mulqueen jumped off, Carroll took off, veterinarians pounced into action, the equine ambulance rumbled to life and a win picture was an afterthought.

Owner Patrick Lewis stood on the track and then walked out alone.

"I'm still at a loss for words with how to process it all," Lewis said. "Throughout the course of this year with the highs and lows we've had, that's up there with the highest high and lowest low within about 30 seconds. Again, it's horse racing, unfortunately. We've got to make sure he's OK. If he is, that's all that matters."

Blue Creek suffered a tear in his left front suspensory. He will be treated and, in all likelihood, the promising son of Demarchelier (GB) could return next summer or fall. Brion sent him home to Fair Hill Training Center and a treatment plan was in the works within days.

"He's doing great, was scanned two days ago and is already showing signs of healing which is awesome," Brion said in early August. "He's at Krissy Close's farm [near Fair Hill in Pennsylvania] where I send all my rehabs and he's spoiled and doing well."

If the injury brought fear and uncertainty, the performance only scared Blue Creek's opponents.

Mulqueen angled the two-time hurdle winner into a sweet spot, well off runaway leader Beat Le Bon (Fr), a pulling Caramelised (GB) and just off Sultan Pierji (Fr). Blue Creek parked next to favorite China Beach and both waited while the 2⅜-mile race went awry early. Gerard Galligan fell off on the first turn after his stirrup broke atop L'Avvocato (Fr). Freddie Procter pulled up Kitten Around when the saddle slipped forward.

With a circuit to go, Caramelised took over from a spent Beat Le Bon while China Beach, Blue Creek and Quick Master maneuvered into position. Turning down the backside the final time, Caramelised retreated, China Beach rolled to the lead, Quick Master snuck through on the inside and Mulqueen took a pull.

"I wanted to get closer to them down the back, when I got closer, the boys covered me and went by me," said Mulqueen. "I actually thought they were going early."

COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Blue Creek (left) jumps alongside China Beach early in the Jonathan Kiser Memorial at Saratoga.

China Beach and Quick Master jumped the final hurdle in tandem as Blue Creek shifted to the inside and waited a little longer. At the top of the stretch, he stumbled off the heels of the leaders before switching outside and rolling past China Beach. Blue Creek won by 4¼ lengths, snapping China Beach's three-race win streak. Quick Master faded to third after 4:34.86.

"This fella doesn't do anything when he gets in front so I was trying to wait as long as I could. He was impressive," Mulqueen said. "He was pricking his ears going up the straight and I was just keeping him going. A stride before the line, when I started to ease him down, I felt him going."

A $25,000 fall yearling purchase at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic in 2022, Blue Creek went flat racing at first. He won his second start at Colonial Downs, and placed in the Laurel Futurity and Awad Stakes as a 2-year-old. The Kentucky-bred lost three straight to begin his 3-year-old season and made a winning switch to hurdling at Shawan Downs in September. He finished second and third behind older horses to close last season. This year, he won a handicap at Aiken before finishing second to China Beach at the Iroquois.

"This is a special horse for a lot of reasons. One of the most special is his name. Blue Creek is the fox hunting region just south of Nashville, where the Iroquois Steeplechase formed, we named him after that, not thinking he would go on to be a jumper," Lewis said. "When he became a jumper, I thought it would be poetic if he could end up being a good one and win at Iroquois."

Second there in May, that will have to wait, but Blue Creek will get another chance. *– Sean Clancy*

■ The Brion barn made it 2-for-2 when Historic Heart (Ire) made up for lost time in the $150,000 A.P. Smithwick Memorial-G1 July 23. Affectionately known as "Harry" around the barn, the 8-year-old hadn't won since April 2022 and hadn't finished a race since a second in the 2023 Smithwick.

In the Smithwick, he and visiting Irish jockey Danny Mullins made the most of a paceless race by sitting second behind Kitten Around, taking the lead with a quarter-mile to go and staving off a rallying Proven Innocent late to win by a nose at almost 11-1.

"That was special," Brion said. "We've always loved him, we've always thought he was a top-class horse, but obviously it's not been easy getting here. He had some issues and the owners were always very patient and good about it. He ran in an apprentice race in April to just get a run, and it was fine, but the rider fell off of him two from home."

None of that mattered to Historic Heart, who prepped at Fair Hill Training Center and delivered his best American race for Paul Willis' Atlantic Friends Racing.

"He's just been training so good and he just had so much heart, and he always had," said Brion. "I knew if he got in a battle, he'd be tough to get by just off of pure will, and he proved that today."

The running order didn't change much for 2 miles, at which point Historic Heart took over. Some others retreated, and Proven Innocent (a winner over the course in June) started passing horses. He matched strides with Historic Heart at the eighth pole, but couldn't get past. Historic Heart won by in 4:37.46 for 2⅜ miles. Zarak the Brave (Fr) finished third.

A top jockey in Ireland in town for the Grade 1, Mullins said the trip aboard Historic Heart went according to plan.

"The tactics of the race worked out quite nicely," he said. "As is always, Keri and Paul and all the owners and syndicates put great faith in me to make decisions that I feel are best to win. Sometimes that doesn't come up, but we make every decision in the horse's best interest and winning the race. I got a bit of freedom going out there and thankfully we've delivered today."

Historic Heart was the first horse to race in the U.S. for Atlantic Friends Racing, which Willis started to campaign horses in England. An English native who lives in New Hampshire, he had his first American runner when Historic Heart came over in 2021 after winning three races with Nigel Hawke in England.

"It means more than anything," Willis said. "This is the first horse that we ever brought to America. He's won a couple of times over here. He's been very, very unlucky the last year and a half, two years. We got him back and he's just not quite been ready. Then, Keri had him in absolutely tip-top condition . . . I'm thrilled for Danny, thrilled for Keri, thrilled for Atlantic Friends Racing and the horse. He's just the nicest monster you could come across. He's a star . . . That's my third Grade 1 win and I'm just super excited." *– Alec DiConza*

■ Conor Tierney had heard about Saratoga.

"I sure did," the Irish apprentice jump jockey said after riding a winner at the New York track July 30. "Saratoga is a big deal even in Ireland and England. It's where all the top horses come. The best in the world. For me, it's unbelievable. Really good. Really special."

The 21-year-old, in his second ride at Saratoga and third season in the U.S, provided a specialized ride aboard Hidden Path, dropping the son of Hard Spun to the back of the eight-horse field, gradually working into contention and securing a comfortable win in the $70,000 allowance hurdle. Owned by Upland Flats Racing and trained by Ricky Hendriks, the 5-year-old won for the second time over hurdles and fourth time in his career, increasing his earnings to $281,075. A two-time winner for Starlight Racing and Todd Pletcher on the flat, Hidden Path switched codes after failing to reach his reserve at the Keeneland November sale in 2023.

The $300,000 yearling purchase broke his maiden at Foxfield under Harry Beswick in April 2024 and held his own on the NYRA circuit last summer, finishing second in the Michael G. Walsh at Saratoga and third in the Grade 1 Lonesome Glory at Aqueduct. He finished last season with a second in the Harry E. Harris, a 4-year-old hurdle stakes at Far Hills.

Hendriks prepped Hidden Path in a two-other-than allowance on the turf at Delaware Park in July. He finished last, but primed the pump.

"The flat race didn't go perfectly, too keen early on. I messed up last year and didn't get a race into him, it kept raining off. I got a race for him earlier this year. It helped him. He was quiet in the paddock, I said, 'We're in good shape here,'" Hendriks said. "Nice horse. He's a runner. He could jump from day one. He was always too keen and Harry has brought him along, developed him. Conor did a great job today."

Tierney melted Hidden Path from the start and allowed his seven rivals to scrum in front, lagging 4 lengths behind the field. Memento (Fr) led for a circuit while favorite St. John's pulled hard on the inside in midpack. With a circuit to go, Tierney switched Hidden Path to an outside lane and began to move forward.

"I got him settled early and was happy with my position," Tierney said. "He can be a bit keen, he did too much in a Grade 1 last year, so I just settled him out the back. They looked like they were doing a lot in front, I knew it would collapse after we jumped the last. And it did."

For owner Patrick Lewis, it was another win and another world. Blue Creek took the Jonathan Kiser Stakes July 16 and injured a suspensory. There was no winner's circle celebration for a bittersweet win. This time, it was nothing but sweet.

"I watched him gallop out and gallop back," Lewis said after being joined by his wife, Brianna, and sons Connell and Gray. "This time is a little different, got the full family with us, they have not been in a winner's circle since Red Carpet Ready won the Fern Creek in 2022. Really, really special. I'm getting emotional over a non-winners-of-two."

– Sean Clancy

To Virginia, with Horses

■ Shopping for prospects at the Goffs spring horses in training sale at Doncaster in Great Britain two years ago, trainer

SUSIE RAISHER / COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Historic Heart and Danny Mullins fly a fence with a lap to go in the A.P. Smithwick Memorial.

Neil Morris went over some prospects with agent Anthony Bromley of Highflyer Bloodstock.

"Would you consider a mare?" Bromley asked, and brought up Avakate (Ire). She'd won two National Hunt flat races and run once over hurdles while racing for Highflyer's Million in Mind Partnership and trainers Andrew Slattery and Alan King. Morris looked, thought it over and spent $44,510 on the daughter of Irish-bred Affinisea.

Then he got to work.

"I sat down with a cup of tea and made a few calls, and got her syndicated before dinner," Morris said. Tom Collins of Ballybristol Farm bought 50 percent. Vincent Bonanni took 25 percent and Virginians Pat Butterfield and Tom Bishop split the last quarter. She's more than paid them back this year with two wins in two starts at Colonial Downs, the latest in the $100,000 Randolph D. Rouse Memorial Aug. 7.

Twice placed over hurdles last year, once against males, the now 7-year-old won her 2025 debut at Colonial July 24 and came right back to take the stakes as the over 3-5 favorite over five rivals. Avakate broke running for Graham Watters, set the pace throughout, led by 8 lengths after 2 miles and widened to 13¼ by the finish after 2¼ miles in 4:03.55. Madaket's Arrow finished second with Anador (Fr) third. Gold Charm, winner of her last four and dominant in a filly/mare hurdle stakes in May, did not enter after being among the nominations.

Her scratch weakened the field, but also created an opportunity. Avakate made the most of it. Morris had her ready to run this spring, but she fell in a point-to-point start at Old Dominion in April and was scratched from a start at Middleburg Spring with a cut on a forearm. She finished third at Potomac Point-to-Point in May, and rested up for a summer campaign.

Things didn't go much better, at first, as her targeted race was rained out July 10. She returned two weeks later and blasted nine others by 12½ lengths in a $60,000 filly/mare maiden hurdle. She was even better in the Rouse.

"I would have liked to have had four weeks between races, that was the plan, so the cancellation pushed us a little bit. It was not ideal, but she handled it. She gets it. She's a very good jumper and has a high cruising speed and a little kick."

She might be more work before her races, than actually in them.

"We have to hold her hand a little bit in the parade ring," Morris said. "She doesn't want a halter on or a chain over her

COADY MEDIA

Avakate (right) snaps her knees while leading in the Randy Rouse at Colonial Downs.

nose, so it just takes a little more planning. If it's her idea, it's fine. If it's not, it can be a challenge sometimes."

The win made Morris think of his early days in American jump racing, when he met Rouse – an owner, trainer, rider and leader on the point-to-point and NSA circuit for decades – while working for Zohar and Lisa Ben-Dov's Kinross Farm.

"It was special to win the Randy Rouse, he's a legend in our area and I'm glad they have that race," Morris said. "He was huge, huge friends of Zohar's and I was with Zohar for 27 years. They were great friends. I met him in the 1990s."

Rouse died at age 100 in 2017, after a lengthy career in business and racing. His top horses included Uruguayan flat champion Cinzano, half of a horse-switching controversy at Belmont Park in 1977. The horse was barred from competition in races with wagering, so Rouse acquired him, taught him to jump and won 21 point-to-point races with the horse.

– Joe Clancy

■ Much of the Colonial program centered on maiden hurdle races, and nobody did better than trainer Jack Fisher. He won three, each worth $60,000, with recent flat converts. Riverdee Stable's Cyber Ninja scored in his hurdle debut July 17. The 5-year-old Arrogate gelding won twice on the flat and placed in a stakes at Kentucky Downs last year for breeder George Krikorian and trainer Bill Mott.

A week after that win, Matt Groff's 4-year-old Starlifter won his hurdle debut after winning once in 14 flat starts for trainer Phil Schoenthal and Kingdom Bloodstock. The son of Maryland sire First Mondays was bred in Maryland by Glenangus Farm and sold to Schoenthal for $15,000 at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic fall yearling sale in 2022.

On Aug. 7, Bruton Street-US runner The Jackal won his hurdle debut. The 5-year-old son of Medaglia d'Oro lost seven starts for Woodford Racing and partners and trainer Shug McGaughey on the flat before selling for $37,000 at Keeneland November last year.

Watters enjoyed the summer stanza at Colonial Downs, winning with seven of his eight rides through Aug. 7. The three-time jockey champion tripled on that day's card, and doubled on the July 17 and July 24 programs. Through Aug. 7, he led the jockeys' standings with 14 wins, six more than Mulqueen. Fisher's summer run gave him 16 as a trainer, six more than Leslie Young and Kathy Neilson.

Colonial's program was slated to wrap up Sept. 11 while the New York Racing Association finishes up at Aqueduct Sept. 18. Maryland's Shawan Downs gets the fall season started properly Sept. 27. Other autumn highlights are Far Hills in New Jersey Oct. 18, International Gold Cup Oct. 25 and a double-meet finish line with Aiken and the Colonial Cup in South Carolina Nov. 22-23. ■

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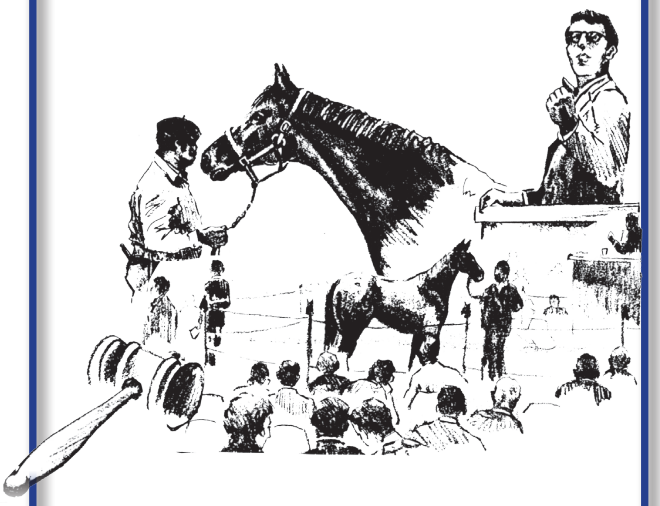

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MARYLAND-BRED ROMEO BRINGS $1.7 MILLION TO TOP FASIG-TIPTON JULY SALE

By Ali Çetinok ■ Fasig-Tipton Photographs

The final horse through the ring at Fasig-Tipton's July selected horses of racing age sale turned out to be the star of the night.

Juvenile stakes winner Romeo, cataloged as Hip 370 and consigned by Paramount Sales for owner Joey Lloyd, fetched a record $1.7 million at the company's Lexington, Ky., base July 8. The hammer fell after intense bidding between domestic and international interests, with Mahmud Mouni securing the colt on behalf of Tagermeen Racing.

Romeo's sale capped off a meteoric rise for the Maryland-bred colt, who just over a week earlier shattered the stakes record in the Bashford Manor at Churchill Downs. The 2-year-old son of Honor A. P. led from gate to wire and pulled away late to win by 3¾ lengths June 29.

The colt's reserve was set at $750,000. It didn't take long for the action to soar beyond that figure, a moment Lloyd shared with his two sons as they watched from home.

"It was really crazy. We put the horse in the sale and I had a good feeling," Lloyd said. "The price just kept climbing: $1 million, 1.2, 1.3, it was unbelievable. We were so excited."

The energy in the Lloyd household matched the energy in the sales pavilion.

"They were screaming too," he said of his sons. "It was really cool."

Just 10 months prior, Romeo had failed to meet his $14,000 reserve at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic fall yearling sale at Timonium, Md., and sold privately to Jerry and Gina Robb for $2,500. Bred by John Davison, the colt won his debut at Laurel Park May 3 and finished third in the Tremont Stakes at Saratoga Race Course June 5.

"We liked him all along, he made the first cut at the Maryland Horse Breeders Association yearling show [in 2024]," said Davison, who said pre-sale vettings dinged Romeo for potential breathing issues. "I needed to sell some horses because we kept a bunch of 2-year-olds we had that didn't sell."

Jerry Robb gave credit to his wife for the purchase and said she appreciated the pedigree and the horse's conformation.

"Gina picked the horse out and bought him at the sale," the trainer said. "He's a very good-looking horse, she loved that mare he's out of and it looks like his sire has had some good horses now. I guess nobody knew much about him at the time."

After the Tremont, Romeo got back on the road and went to Churchill Downs for the Bashford Manor, a 6-furlong race worth $225,000. After a front-running win in 1:08.61, he joined the catalog at the sale where he caught the attention of high-end buyers.

"Man, it's wild," Lloyd said. "Sometimes horses slip through the cracks and turn out to be superstars. You dream about it, but you don't often see it. When it happens, it's something special."

Romeo gave signs of potential from day one, according to Lloyd, who compared him to another top runner he campaigned, multiple stakes winner Street Lute.

"Romeo came in super professional from day one," Lloyd said. "He was one of the first horses to hit the track when training started. He was calm, quiet, and acted like he'd done it all before. People at the barn were always asking, 'Who's that horse?' Even other jockeys took notice."

Lloyd said he had "the feeling" about Romeo early, especially watching him in the mornings.

"I was at every one of his workouts before his debut. When he won by 10 lengths, I knew it. Especially since he wasn't

Maryland-bred juvenile stakes winner Romeo made an impression on the Fasig-Tipton sales grounds in Kentucky in July.

even being asked – just cruising," he said. "Without even being touched, you know? I knew it."

Even in his lone defeat, the Tremont, Lloyd came away impressed by his colt's grit.

"Even when he didn't like the surface and finished third, he still tried as hard as he could to fight to finish third," said Lloyd. "That takes heart. He has a lot of heart and just kept fighting even in that race. It was kind of impressive."

Romeo's next start would become his signature win that not only earned him a stakes record but also launched his commercial value.

"A ton," Lloyd said, when asked how much that race factored into the final price. "Any time a Maryland-bred goes to Kentucky and wins like that, it's impressive. There are always nice horses in that race. For him to do what he did, it really made a statement. That race produced a lot of sires, too."

First run in 1902, the Bashford Manor includes T.V. Commercial, Summer Squall, Favorite Trick, Kantharos and Classic Empire on its list of winners.

Romeo's sire Honor A. P. cost $825,000 as a Saratoga yearling and won the Santa Anita Derby-G1 before finishing fourth in Authentic's 2020 Kentucky Derby and retiring to Lane's End Farm. The stallion's 2025 includes a Black-Eyed Susan-G2 win by daughter Margie's Intention and the fireworks created by Romeo. Last year at Timonium, Lloyd figured a colt by the stallion was worth a look.

"I just thought it was a good chance to see what he could do, especially for the price," he said. "When stallions are still proving themselves, you take a shot and hope it works out."

Romeo is the sixth foal out of Fancy Love, a daughter of Not For Love bred by Glade Valley Farm and owner Howard Bender after buying her dam Fleet and Fancy from Stonerside

"For sure, I will miss him. I'd love to be getting him ready for Saratoga, but it was just too much money to turn down. Still, I'll definitely miss the excitement he brought."

–Joey Lloyd

New King, a 4-year-old stakes-placed Maryland-bred son of Into Mischief with wins in California and Maryland, sold for $225,000.

Stable. Fancy Love's half-sister Addison Run produced graded stakes runners Gouverneur Morris and Final Jeopardy. Before Romeo, Fancy Love produced Super Love, who won his first three for Davison. The family includes champion Midshipman and Grade 1 winner Frosted, an earner of nearly $4 million.

"That family has produced some really good horses," Lloyd said. "Super Love was one of them, I remember him when he broke his maiden. He was fast early on, won a few in a row. A really nice horse."

Romeo's impact extended to Mouni's purchase of Fancy Love for $260,000 (in foal to Arcangelo) at Fasig-Tipton's digital sale July 17. The agent for Libyan buyer Tagermeen Racing was also active at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic's May sale of 2-year-olds, with five purchases for $2,765,000.

Lloyd called the action a meaningful endorsement of the state's breeding program.

"Hopefully, people realize we've got good horses here," Lloyd said. "Just look around – Post Time, for example. The breeding is strong, and the people here do a great job of developing them. It's great for the game in Maryland. We're doing great things here."

Romeo joined Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen in Saratoga, with long-range sights on the 2026 season in the Middle East. Lloyd admitted he'll miss having Romeo in his barn.

"For sure, I will miss him," he said. "I'd love to be getting him ready for Saratoga, but it was just too much money to turn down. Still, I'll definitely miss the excitement he brought. I hope he stretches out and can go longer. I'll be rooting for him every race. What he did for me and my family, I'll always cheer for him."

New King joins Mouni's crew

Romeo wasn't the only Maryland-bred to attract the attention of Mouni at Fasig-Tipton's July sale. He also went to $225,000 to acquire stakes-placed New King, a 4-year-old son of Into Mischief consigned by Elite for SF Racing and partners.

Bred in Maryland by Matt Dorman's 2500 Determined Stud, New King is out of the Distorted Humor mare Hollywood Royal, a winner and a half-sister to stakes winners Laurie's Rocket and Greeley's Rocket. The female family has produced multiple black-type standouts, including Grade 1 winner Prince of Monaco and millionaire Necker Island.

A $700,000 Keeneland September yearling, New King began his career on the West Coast with Hall of Famer Bob Baffert, winning twice before being transferred to Brittany Russell's barn in Maryland this year. He finished second in the Frank Y. Whiteley Stakes at Laurel Park in April and won an allowance there in June. ■

Additional reporting by Joe Clancy

Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred©

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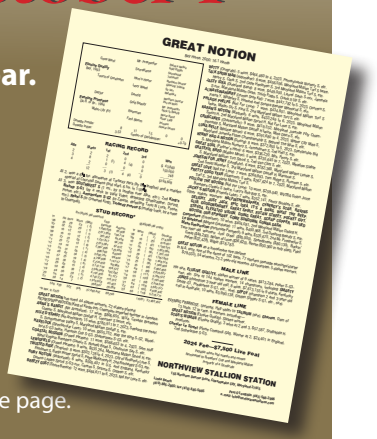

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Working Lucky

ZEEZEE ZOOMZOOM PAYS OFF – AGAIN – WITH $1.4 MILLION COLT AT SARATOGA

By Joe Clancy ■ Fasig-Tipton Photographs

A breeder could channel the inner workings of Federico Tesio's brain, have access to the finest geneticists in the world and still find just one way to build a Thoroughbred family.

Step by step.

That's how Pennsylvanian Lizzie Merryman went from saying yes to a free broodmare prospect with a suspensory injury to a $1.4 million yearling by a Triple Crown winner at Fasig-Tipton's Saratoga select sale in about nine years.

"It was a lot of luck, definitely a lot of hard work, but I don't care how hard you work, you don't get a Zeezee Zoomzoom without a lot of luck," Merryman said a few minutes after her Pennsylvania-bred colt by Justify lit up the Humphrey S. Finney Sales Pavilion in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Aug. 4. His dam, Zeezee Zoomzoom, was that free mare and Merryman cultivated a family of runners by mixing her work and a little random luck with some strong Thoroughbred genes. Consigned by Fergus Galvin's Hunter Valley Farm, the colt – one of 25 seven-figure horses at a blockbuster sale – sold to Qatar Racing.

Without seeing the then 4-year-old filly, Merryman sent her to Kentucky stallion Mizzen Mast, a son of Cozzene who raced in France and won three American turf stakes for Hall of Fame trainer Bobby Frankel and breeder Juddmonte Farms. She arrived at her new owner's farm young, in foal and stressed out.

"She was very, very high strung, and very much an alpha mare, not very trusting," Merryman said. "She didn't trust other horses. She didn't trust people. She didn't trust anything. She didn't trust being in a stall."

Not that Merryman blamed her. In less than a year, Zeezee Zoomzoom had gone from Saratoga Race Course maiden winner to injured racehorse in Florida to giveaway candidate to a date with a stallion in Kentucky and finally to the Buffalo Run Ranch in Chester County, Pa., Merryman shares with her husband Bill Rubin and a herd of, yes, buffalo. Bred in Kentucky by Woodford Thoroughbreds, the gray Congrats filly sold for $80,000 as a yearling and $135,000 at OBS as a 2-year-old. For owner/trainer Amy Tarrant, Zeezee Zoomzoom won once in 10 starts, the last for a $50,000 claiming price at Gulfstream Park in February 2016.

With an injury, she stared at a lengthy recovery process and Tarrant contacted Kim Brette about finding the filly a home.

"She'd been coming back from a small suspensory injury and it wasn't healing as well as we wanted," said Brette, then working for a veterinarian. "Amy, wonderful horsewoman that she is, didn't want to push her and get her hurt on the track. She knew I knew different people and she asked if I knew anyone who would want her as a riding horse or a broodmare."

While at Fair Hill Training Center the previous summer, Brette galloped for Merryman and thought the filly might fit the owner/trainer/breeder's program.

"Hey Lizzie, there's this mare," Brette said on a telephone call.

"Kim, I don't know," replied Merryman, making a mental checklist of horses already in the program.

"Honestly, she's lovely," Brette replied. "She's correct. What have you got to lose?"

In August, Brette recalled a mare with potential for any number of paths.

"There was nothing wrong with her," she said. "Realistically, you probably could have raced her again. She wasn't a slouch. She'd won a race at Saratoga. She was nice. I've been around horses a long time and you can see mares that have a body type

"I feel like the daily care as a baby, bringing them up is so important. With a young mare like that, not selling the first few foals so you make sure that they get treated right and you make sure they have every chance to show who they are is important."

–Breeder Lizzie Merryman, on making a Thoroughbred family

that would make a nice broodmare when they're let down. Lizzie bred her own horses to race. I knew she would be realistic and give the mare a chance."

When the filly bounced off the van in the winter of 2017, Merryman wasn't so sure. Then she turned her out in a paddock.

"Damn, that's a pretty mover," Merryman told herself as the filly sped past. "That is one beautiful mover."

With the Mizzen Mast foal, a filly, on the ground, Merryman sent Zeezee Zoomzoom to Maryland stallion Bourbon Courage at her nephew Louis' Anchor and Hope Farm. Zeezee Zoomzoom delivered a filly in 2018 and stayed in state for a date with Northview Stallion Station's Great Notion. She went back to Anchor and Hope, and Holy Boss, in 2019 and to Great Notion in 2020.

Then came the runners.

The Mizzen Mast filly, Caravel, won four of five starts (two stakes) in 2020 on the way to 15 wins, $1,983,327 in earnings and two Grade 1 scores over males.

The Bourbon Courage filly, Tipsy Chatter, won in 2021.

The Great Notion foal, now the gelding Witty, was up to 11 wins and 11 seconds in 33 starts with $897,782 earned through Aug. 12.

The Holy Boss foal, now the gelding Mission Man, has won three times.

The next Great Notion foal, now the gelding Enzo, won at Laurel Park in May.

All that success spurred some further-afield stallion choices and Zeezee Zoomzoom delivered a Street Boss filly in May 2022. Named Somnium, she's lost all five starts, but give her time. Merryman sent the mare to Justify at Coolmore's Ashford Stud in 2023. The initial plan was to sell Zeezee Zoomzoom and she made the first session in the catalog at Keeneland November 2023, until Merryman had a change of heart.

"It wasn't a feel-good decision to sell her," she said then. "I was ready. I had the van lined up, all the paperwork done, had her feed packed, she was all shined up and everything was wet and ready to go. I woke up Friday morning and pulled the plug."

The van was set to leave Saturday.

The mare stayed put, and a Justify colt arrived March 3, 2024. Unlike his dam, he was pretty much always headed to a sale.

"Fergus Galvin recommended that I breed her to Justify, which was great, great advice at the time," Merryman said. "When I made the commitment, my plan was to come here with whatever came out. I was trying to breed a Saratoga baby. You don't know if you're going to be right until the hammer falls because anything can happen."

The colt did his part, right up until the auctioneer declared him sold.

"I don't ever remember him doing anything stupid or getting hurt or getting loose, he's always pretty cool," Merryman said. "I was glad when I shipped him to Hunter Valley because I was getting nervous. He was just at that stage where he knew he was a boy and he was starting to play a little too rough with his buddy, and they needed to be separated regardless. I was delighted to hand that over to them and they did such a beautiful job."

Zeezee Zoomzoom had a Nyquist filly this year and was bred to McKinzie but didn't get in foal. Part of one of the region's most well-known Thoroughbred families, Merryman grew up watching her parents John and Kitty breed, raise and race homebreds such as Maryland-bred Hall of Famer Twixt and a slew of others. Merryman and her siblings Katy (Voss), Ann, Edwin and John became owners, trainers and/or breeders. A subsequent generation includes Edwin's son Louis at Anchor and Hope, Ann's son Michael (a former trainer) and Lizzie's son McLane Hendriks (a trainer).

"It's a dream come true," Merryman said of raising a Saratoga yearling who proved to be that popular. "I think my parents would have been happy. It was nerve-wracking, because early in the sale, I was worried that it wasn't going very strong. Then after him, it got very strong."

And then some. The two-night Saratoga sale saw records fall in gross ($100,845,000), average ($626,366) and median ($450,000).

That Zeezee Zoomzoom was part of it still makes the people in her life smile.

"If Lizzie hadn't said OK, I would have spoken to some of my friends who are riding horse people," said Brette, proud owner of a border terrier named Zoomie. "There was no reason she wouldn't have made a show horse. Look at her now, she's paid her dues to live in that field the rest of her life."

Northview continues climb

Every year of Northview Stallion Station's involvement as a consignor at the Saratoga select sale, general manager David Wade talks about "learning" – whether it's what types of horses to bring, how to market them or what homemade ice cream flavors to offer during show days.

Wade has that last part covered – they're all delicious – but the yearling consignment continued its ascent with the sale of a Maryland-bred Medaglia d'Oro filly for $675,000. Bred by Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds, the private portion of the Golden family's operation in Chesapeake City, the filly is a half-sister to a Gun Runner colt sold for $400,000 at last year's Saratoga sale.

The success is a direct result of Michael Golden and sister Lisa Hofstetter reinvesting in the business since their father Richard died in 2021. Sycamore Hall bought stakes winner Nasty as a broodmare prospect for $420,000 at Keeneland November that year and have sold the first two yearlings out of her. She had a Cody's Wish colt this year and is in foal to Constitution, so the commitment isn't going anywhere.

"There's been an effort to improve the broodmare band, so we've sold many of the mares we had and we try to add or one or two each year," said Wade. "It's a very polarized market so you've got to adapt to the demand there is out there. The demand right now is for the better horses so we've tried to adapt."

Northview took its first consignment to Saratoga select in 2022 and sold one horse for $425,000. In 2023, six filled the consignment. Four, including future Kentucky Derby-G1 starter Owen Almighty, sold. In 2024, Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners went to $400,000 to buy Nasty's Gun Runner colt. Named Scope, he didn't run before the sale but was breezing toward a debut with Hall of Fame trainer Todd Pletcher at Saratoga. This year's offering attracted more big names as agent Donato Lanni, bidding for Hall of Famer Bob Baffert's client Baoma Corporation, made the winning bid.

The filly was one of just three horses bred in the Mid-Atlantic in a sale dominated by Kentucky-breds eligible for rich Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund purse incentives at that state's tracks.

LOUISE E. REINAGEL

In addition to homemade ice cream, David Wade served up this Maryland-bred Medaglia d'Oro filly for $675,000.

"She showed well, she came up to the sale well and we had the right people looking at her," said Wade. "Bob Baffert typically doesn't race in Maryland unless he's coming to the Preakness, yet he found value in buying a Maryland-bred. Last year, I was told by a buyer that you're sacrificing some money by not having the horse eligible for the KTDF money but if you have a good horse it really comes down to, 'Why not take a chance on it?' We're thrilled with the hands she got into. If she's as good a horse as we think she is, she'll go as far as she can."

NOTES: The sale's only other Maryland-bred, a Charlatan colt bred by Matt Dorman's 2500 Determined Stud out of the Great Notion stakes winner Elevated Vision and a half-brother to stakes winner Determined Driver, did not meet his reserve at $120,000 . . . Maryland breeder Caroline Stautberg's Willow Oaks Stable sold three Kentucky-bred yearlings through consignor Bluegrass Thoroughbred Services. A $210,000 Uncle Mo filly from the Shackleford mare Champagne Ivy topped the group and will go to Repole Stable . . . Agent Cary Frommer bought a Liam's Map filly out of the Curlin mare Red Curls for Ellen Charles' Hillwood Stable, which campaigns Maryland-bred star Post Time among others . . . Pennsylvania's Erdenheim Farm, headed by Peter McCausland, spent $1.475 million for a Gun Runner filly out of Kentucky Oaks-G1 winner Shedaresthedevil . . . Virginia-based agent Chris Gracie bought two colts, an Uncle Mo and a Jackie's Warrior, for $300,000 each. . . Pennsylvanians Roy and Gretchen Jackson of Lael Stable bought an $875,000 Gun Runner filly . . . Regional owner/breeder The Elkstone Group spent $150,000 on a Jack Christopher filly. ■

Mama's Boy

SLAM NOTION TAKES AFTER DAM, WINS STAKES FOR RIZERS

By Joe Clancy ■ *Photographs by Coady Media*

Last year at Eric and Nancy Rizer's Grey Lady Farm in The Plains, Va., a mare died giving birth and her foal needed a nurse mare – in a hurry. Balestra, barren and basically pensioned, filled in admirably and even allowed the foal to nurse before hormones kicked in and restarted her milk production.

The response didn't surprise the Rizers, who watched the daughter of Grand Slam raise her foals, including recent Colonial Downs stakes winner Slam Notion, for years.

"She's just the kindest mare," said Eric Rizer of the 20-year-old. "And when you think about it, Slam Notion has been a very, very easy horse to work with. He was never a problem on the farm. Maybe he's a very, very cool guy for a reason. He gets it from his mother."

And that's working out just fine.

The 3-year-old Great Notion gelding won for the fourth time in eight starts with a 2-length victory over Barbadian Runner in the $125,000 Star de Naskra Stakes July 12. One of a handful of stakes moved from Maryland to Virginia this year in part of a two-state cooperative agreement, the race was restricted to Maryland-bred/sired and Virginia-bred/sired 3-year-olds and produced a field of eight. Off a win in the Jersey Derby in May and a second in the Delaware Derby in June, Henry Walters trainee Barbadian Runner wound up the favorite at 2-1.

Off the only bad race of his career when eighth in the Chick Lang Stakes at Pimlico, Slam Notion started at nearly 7-1 but rewarded his backers by rallying out of a stalking trip through a half-mile in :44.55 to take over while four wide and see out the win for jockey J.G. Torrealba as Barbadian Runner rallied for second, with Re Markably third. The winner needed 1:21.44 to navigate 7 furlongs, and gave trainer Robbie Bailes his first stakes win since 2014.

"That horse of Henry Walters' I wasn't sure we could handle him, but he found the right time to peak," said Bailes. "This colt here is just rock solid. The only bad race he threw was Preakness Day and he just got a really bad trip. I thought he would run really well. The only thing I wasn't sure about was the 7 furlongs. I gave him a good freshening after the Preakness race and he responded."

The Rizers sent horses to Bailes last year after using several trainers during a 25-year run as owners/breeders.

"He was one of the first horses I got from them," said Bailes. "I just got their business maybe a little more than a year ago and he was in the first group. They're all about their horses. They foal them themselves and work hard at it."

The Rizers bought their farm, and their first mares, in 2000 and have been at it ever since while producing stakes winner Princess Kokachin among others. They're hands-on, very, and along with farm manager Lamont Grayson foaled six of their mares this year while boarding another 20 for clients.

Slam Notion was part of the gang when he was raised at Grey Lady in 2022. The Rizers believe in keeping young horses busy, and see physical and mental benefits to exercising them on a free walker.

"Once they're weaned, we put the babies on there," Eric said of the walker. "It gives them structure, starts building bone mass. Our babies have been really sound, they muscle up well, grow up well. They come into the barn every day, they walk out, they get on the Eurociser, get baths and just do things horses do. By the time they're older, they're easy to handle."

After some early work with Chris Melton in Kentucky, Slam Notion went to Bailes at Laurel Park last year. The bay finished sixth in his debut in October, was gelded afterward, and won in December. Four first-level allowance starts produced two wins (one by disqualification) and two seconds

ÇOADY

to earn a try in the Chick Lang Stakes on Preakness Day at Pimlico Race Course. He finished eighth after a rough start.

"I gave him a good freshening after the Preakness race and circled two spots – the stakes and an allowance race at the end of the month. We'd given him plenty of rest so that's what I was shooting for."

Slam Notion took care of business in the Star de Naskra, and it was decided to test him on the turf next out. But after finishing off the board in a 5½-furlong turf allowance July 30, his owners noted he'll be back on the dirt in his next race.

The gelding wasn't the only winner for Bailes at Colonial as the barn picked up four victories in the first 10 days of the summer meet (through July 24). Rizer homebred Slewperstitus won her debut by 8¾ lengths July 9, rallying from seventh early to win going away. Steven Smith's Chase by the Moon and WWCD's Grand Opening also picked up Virginia victories for Bailes, whose grandfather (also Robert) worked at the Chenery family's Meadow Stud in Doswell, Va.

"It's been nice to me so far," Bailes said of the summer schedule. "It's home to me, and the first time I've had a real string down here for probably 10 or 15 years. We were shipping in

The Colonial Downs winner's circle was full following Slam Notion's win (from left): trainer Robbie Bailes, Maryland and Virginia breeders association representatives Christie Steele, Debbie Easter and Jim Steele, owner/breeders Eric and Nancy Rizer, jockey J.G. Torrealba, farm manager Lamont Grayson, and Star de Naskra presenters Cheryl Lancaster and Taylor Branson.

Virginia-bred Winfinity (above) won easily as the favorite in the the Miss Disco. Millionaire Repo Rocks won for the first time in nearly a year when taking the Edward P. Evans.

and out last couple years. We have some decent horses we can have some fun with down here. All my horses are Virginia-certified and that kind of pushes you that way with the money they give away."

The Rizers enjoyed their most success on the track with Princess Kokachin, who won a dozen races and earned $510,720. She joined the broodmare band in 2024 and delivered a Violence colt this year.

"He looks identical to her – same huge rump, same shoulder – and I keep saying I hope he runs like she did," said Eric. "We bred her to Volatile, and her [stakes-placed] sister Sparkle Sprinkle too, this year."

Say Me True, a half-brother to Princess Kokachin, won his debut at Laurel last year and looked like another potential star until he went for surgery to remove small bone chips in a knee. The Golden Lad colt had a reaction to an antibiotic after returning to the farm, got sick and had to be euthanized.

"Things like that really make you appreciate the wins," said Eric. "That horse had so much promise. I called Robbie and he was crushed too. He really liked that horse, we all did."

Virginia Heat

Virgina-bred **Winfinity** landed the $125,000 Miss Disco on the July 12 card for Dream Big Racing and trainer John Ortiz. Ann Mudge Backer's Smitten Farm bred the now 3-year-old filly and sold her for $385,000 at Fasig-Tipton Saratoga in 2023. By Not This Time out of the Awesome Again mare Winter, Winfinity won her debut at Colonial in the 2024 Keswick Stakes and entered the Miss Disco off four consecutive losses.

"Winfinity loves this track," said owner John Wade of Dream Big Racing. "She won her first stakes last year then got injured at another track and came back here and did great. We were excited to see her today. She did what she always does. She stays in there, then she closes and makes it exciting and makes my heart pound a little extra more."

The early returns at Colonial Downs had trainers **Mike Trombetta** and **Brittany Russell** tied at the top of the standings with six wins each. Bailes, Jamie Ness and Jack Fisher were tied for second with four but the success was spread around.

In addition to Slam Notion and Winfinity, early stakes winners included:

- Virginia-bred veteran **Repo Rocks** in the $125,000 Edward P. Evans July 18 for Ness and Double B Racing Stables. Bred by Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin III, the 7-year-old multiple graded stakes winner won for the 11th time, but the first in 11 months, while pushing his lifetime earnings to $1,120,466.
- Virginia-bred 3-year-old filly **Noquestionaboutit** in the $125,000 Glenn Petty July 19 for Trombetta and the estate of Larry Johnson. The Johnson homebred is a daughter of Great Notion and the Street Magician mare Magician'squestion.
- Virginia-bred 4-year-old **Showstopper Copper** in the $125,000 Punch Line for trainer Thomas Lingenfelter and owner Bill Dove. Bred by Carlos Moore and Gillian Gordon-Moore, the gelding collected his first stakes win and second victory of 2025 after taking a Penn National allowance in January.
- Virginia-bred 4-year-old filly **Thursday Girl** in the $125,000 Brookmeade for Russell and Timbercreek Racing. Bred by Knockgriffin Farm, the daughter of Speightster became a stakes winner while winning for the third time. Two starts before the stakes win, she finished fourth over hurdles for trainer Richard Valentine. ■

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Merryman Moment

Ingordo crowns Great Notion colt at yearling show

By Ali Çetinok

Michael Merryman leads his mother Ann Merryman's Great Notion colt, the Grand Champion of the 91st annual MHBA Yearling Show.

Bloodstock agent David Ingordo has helped shape the careers of Hall of Famers and Horse of the Year winners. Still, on a sweltering June day in Timonium, he joined a tradition nearly a century old, leaving with a lasting impression.

Ingordo, best known for selecting racing greats such as Zenyatta and Flightline at yearling sales, judged the 91st annual Maryland Horse Breeders Association Yearling Show, Sunday, June 29, at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium. The show has long celebrated the state's breeding program, and this year, it featured a near-sweep by one of Maryland racing's most prominent families, the Merrymans.

"It's obviously an honor because I looked at the list and I said, 'I'm not a shadow of most

MHBA president Kent Murray (left) and Mike Pons present the Grand Champion trophies to Ann and Michael Merryman.

Louis Merryman accepts the Reserve Champion trophy for Anchor and Hope Farm's Bourbon Courage filly handled by Kimberly Myers.

Serving the day as ringmaster, Larry Smith (right) makes the presentation to judge David Ingordo.

of these people,' " Ingordo said of joining the show's list of judges, which includes Hall of Fame trainers and major bloodstock names. "So it was very cool, and it was an honor. It's neat to be part of it, 91 years, right?"

Right. The first show came in 1932 and it's been held every year since except during World War II in 1943, 1944 and 1945.

With the hot conditions, Ingordo spent the day walking the showgrounds with a boot on his foot. Something he would later laugh about.

"You know, I don't really know what happened, just pulled up bad one day," he said jokingly. "I've got a fracture in my foot."

Despite the injury, he approached the task with intensity and purpose.

"I took it seriously," he said. "A lot of people put their heart and soul into coming out here today, so you want to do the same thing. It's their first time away from the farms. So, you know, it was a good challenge. I enjoyed it. It was different than looking at a sale because those are prepped to the minute to do that. But these guys are a little more country. It was fun."

Among the 35 yearlings shown, the standout, from the beginning, was a colt by Great Notion out of the Two Punch mare Sista. Bred and owned by Ann Merryman, the colt had everything Ingordo was looking for, and more.

"You know, an athlete, these are supposed to be racehorses," Ingordo said. "When they were all walking up, the first impression is a powerful thing on a horse. And it's funny, the horse that ended up being the champion was one of the first horses I saw. Everybody else after him was either going to be up or down and he remained at the top."

The Great Notion colt, who captured the blue ribbon in Class I for colts and geldings by Maryland stallions, also took home the show's grand champion honors in a final judging among all four class winners.

"Athletes come in all shapes and sizes, and when you listen to the past judges that have done this, there are a lot of good horses that were picked and other good ones that weren't," said Ingordo. "What's that mean? That means they change. But it was a nice bunch of horses as a group. It was very hard in some of the categories to pick a best one."

Nobody goes to the yearling show expecting to win the championship, but the Great Notion colt impressed from his earliest days at home.

"He's gorgeous. He's huge," said Ann's son Michael Merryman, who handled the colt at the sale. "I trained the brother, and he was just as solid. I think he might even have a better brain. I told my sister, this is the best horse I've ever seen. She's seen a lot of horses. I've seen a lot of horses."

With Laura McKinney, Ann Merryman bred, owned and trained Sista out of the Smarten mare Smart Triad. The dark bay won once, a $4,500 maiden claimer at Charles Town, in eight starts before becoming a broodmare.

Her 2017 foal, a son of Friesan Fire, didn't participate in the yearling show, but won two of four starts for the Merrymans in 2019 and 2020 before selling for $400,000 in the Wanamaker's digital sale founded by Ann's niece Liza Hendriks. For new owner Rob Masiello, Fiya added the Maryland Million Turf Sprint, a stakes at the Claiming Crown and two Belmont Park allowance races.

Though seasoned in the sport, Ann still worried about how her colt would handle the atmosphere of the 2025 yearling show.

"It's kind of like when you run a horse first time out," she said. "You see what you have, how they act in the paddock. It's kind of why we wanted to do this."

The colt went through minimal prep.

"I did work with him, and I pulled his mane," she said. "But he's never been off the farm. He was out all night. I gave him a bath this morning and put him on the trailer. He's never left the farm until today."

The reserve champion, a filly by Bourbon Courage out of Fullerene, was bred and owned by Louis and Grace Merryman of Anchor and Hope Farm, further cementing family success as Louis is Ann's nephew. The full-sister to stakes winner Raging Whiskey won Class III for fillies by Maryland stallions.

Katy Voss, Ann Merryman's sister, added to the achievements by winning Class II with a Global Campaign colt out of Tanca. Voss, a longtime show participant, bred the half-brother to millionaire Cordmaker and stakes winner Las Setas.

A Girvin filly out of the Jump Start mare Sexy Reasons (Arg) took Class IV for owner/breeder John Davison. Last year, Davison had three entries, includ-

Kent Murray makes the Class I presentation to Suzanne Stettinius, with sons James and Daniel Edelstein, Ann Merryman and Michael Merryman with the Great Notion colt and eventual grand champion.

Katy Voss (second from right) accepts the Class II trophy from Jim and Christy Steele after the win by her Global Campaign colt handled by Jeff Myers.

Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred editor Joe Clancy (left) presents the Class III trophy to owner/breeder Louis Merryman, with Louis' father Edwin handling the Bourbon Courage filly.

The Maryland State Fair's Fran Burns (left) presents the Class IV trophy to breeder John Davison, Phil Thommen and Hailey Ogg, who handled the Girvin filly.

ing an Honor A. P. colt who placed third in his class. Just hours after the Girvin filly earned her ribbon, the Honor A. P. colt, Romeo, won the Bashford Manor Stakes at Churchill Downs.

Ingordo evaluated each class with the same standard he's used across a career that includes some of the sport's greatest success stories.

"I've got the book and my notes, and I will keep an eye on them for sure," he said when asked whether any yearlings caught his interest as future sale targets.

He credited one of his earliest mentors, Hall of Fame trainer Bobby Frankel, with shaping his approach and acknowledged their different strengths.

"I'll tell you one thing Bobby probably would have agreed with, was that he knew a lot about training horses, but not as much about picking them," Ingordo said. "I'd say one thing he would defer to me on was which one was the good one."

Ingordo got his start working for Frankel as a teenager and was his assistant by 18. He went on to build a career at Juddmonte and Walmac before launching his own agency and later joining Lane's End Bloodstock.

In 2005, he picked out Zenyatta for $60,000 at the Keeneland September yearling sale. The future Hall of Famer won 19 of 20 starts and earned more than $7.3 million. In 2019, he spotted Flightline on the farm, bought him for $1 million, and followed his unbeaten journey to Breeders' Cup Classic glory and Horse of the Year honors.

The list of champions Ingordo has been involved with also includes Accelerate, Uncle Mo, Honor Code, Lady Eli and Stellar Wind. More recently, he selected More Than Looks, winner of the 2024 Breeders' Cup Mile for trainer and wife, Cherie DeVaux.

For all his accolades, Ingordo took time on Sunday to recognize the grassroots effort behind the MHBA show.

"It's hard for these guys, these horses are a little green," he said. "It's their first time away from the farms. So, you know, it was a good challenge."

Beyond the ribbons and trophies, the show offered the potential for long-term reward. The 35 yearlings who participated are eligible for $40,000 in premium awards, with $20,000 split among the top four earners as 2-year-olds in 2026 and another $20,000 split among the top four 3-year-old earners the following year.

Top sire honors went to Northview Stallion Station's Great Notion, whose four entrants all earned ribbons, led by the grand champion.

Special Thanks

The MHBA extends thanks to show sponsors: Fasig-Tipton Midlantic, Gegorek and Company PA, Horizon Farm Credit, James B. Steele Jr., Komlo and Associates Inc., Larking Hill Training Center, Maryland Horse Industry Board, Maryland Jockey Club, Maryland Million, Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Murmur Farm, Northview Stallion Station, The Mill, The Racing Biz, This Is Horse Racing and Wasabi Ventures Stables. Added appreciation goes to the Maryland State Fair (provider of the facility), Country Life Farm (straw)

and Maryland Equine Center (on call throughout the day).

Results

Class I. For colts and geldings foaled in Maryland, the produce of mares covered in Maryland (6 exhibited)

1) dk.b./br.c., 3/5/24, Great Notion—Sista, by Two Punch. Owned and bred by Ann Merryman, Sparks, Md. 2) Seven's Nitro, ch.c., 4/5/24, Blofeld—Lionheart Champion, by Lion Heart. Owned and bred by Cottonwood Stable LLC, Parkton, Md. 3) b.c., 4/15/24, Great Notion—Las Setas, by Seville (Ger). Owned and bred by Katharine M. Voss Revocable Trust, West Friendship, Md. 4) dk.b./br.c., 4/3/24, Bourbon Courage—Carelaine, by Street Cry (Ire). Owned and bred by Anchor and Hope Farm Inc., Port Deposit, Md. 5) (tie) gr./ro.c., 3/17/24, Blofeld—Barouchka, by Not For Love. Owned and bred by Ann B. Jackson, White Hall, Md. and I Can See Heaven, ch.c., 5/3/24, Uncle Lino—Yes I Can, by Two Punch. Owned and bred by Becky Cory, Brooklandville, Md.

Class II. For colts and geldings foaled in Maryland, the produce of mares covered in states other than Maryland (9 exhibited)

1) dk.b./br.c., 3/2/24, Global Campaign—Tanca, by Polish Numbers. Owned and bred by Katharine M. Voss Revocable Trust, West Friendship, Md. 2) ch.c., 2/18/24, Tonalist—Little Bristol, by Good Samaritan. Owned and bred by Katharine M. Voss Revocable Trust, West Friendship, Md. 3) b.c., 4/9/24, McKinzie—War Value, by War Front. Owned and bred by Country Life Farm and War Value LLC, Bel Air, Md. 4) dk.b./br.c., 4/23/24, Olympiad—Kenda, by Bodemeister. Owned and bred by Country Life Farm and Kenda Broodmare LLC, Bel Air, Md. 5) b.c., 4/3/24, Known Agenda—Moon Vision, by Pollard's Vision. Owned and bred by Country Life Farm and Moon Vision Broodmare LLC, Bel Air, Md.

Class III. For fillies foaled in Maryland, the produce of mares covered in Maryland (12 exhibited)

1) b.f., 4/19/24, Bourbon Courage—Fullerene, by Quiet American. Owned and bred by Anchor and Hope Farm Inc., Port Deposit, Md. 2) dk.b./br.f., 4/18/24, Bourbon Courage—Ciella, by Empire Maker. Owned by Allison Delgado. Bred by Anchor and Hope Farm Inc., Port Deposit, Md. 3) b.f., 3/5/24, Great Notion—Elusory, by Broken Vow. Owned and bred by Anchor and Hope Farm Inc., Port Deposit, Md. 4) Dorenlea Moon Cat, dk.b./br.f., 4/28/24, Uncle Lino—Ben's Moon Cat, by Imagining. Owned and bred by Carol Fox, Millers, Md. 5) b.f., 1/29/24, Great Notion—Lemon Drop Kiss, by Lemon Drop Kid. Owned and bred by Katharine M. Voss Revocable Trust, West Friendship, Md.

Class IV. For fillies foaled in Maryland, the produce of mares covered in states other than Maryland (8 exhibited)

1) dk.b./br.f., 3/11/24, Girvin—Sexy Reasons (Arg), by Jump Start. Owned and bred by John C. Davison, Baltimore, Md. 2) ch.f., 3/7/24, Vekoma—Lunar Rille, by English Channel. Owned and bred by Country Life Farm and Lunar Rille LLC, Bel Air, Md. 3) dk.b./br.f., 1/27/24, Speaker's Corner—Saltworks, by Bullsbay. Owned and bred by Katharine M. Voss Revocable Trust, West Friendship, Md. 4) Josie G, b.f., 4/18/24, Bolt d'Oro—Congaree Princess, by Congaree. Owned and bred by Daniel Marconi, Mount Airy, Md. 5) b.f., 1/30/24, Omaha Beach—Maybe I Will, by Will Take Charge. Owned and bred by Country Life Farm and Maybe I Will Broodmare LLC, Bel Air, Md.

Champion—dk.b./br.c., Great Notion—Sista, by Two Punch. Owned and bred by Ann Merryman, Sparks, Md.

Reserve Champion—
b.f., Bourbon Courage—Fullerene, by Quiet American. Owned and bred by Anchor and Hope Farm Inc., Port Deposit, Md.

Northview Stallion Station Get-of-Sire trophy—
GREAT NOTION. Presented to the Maryland stallion whose offspring earn the most points based on: five for first, three (second), two (third), one (fourth) and a half (fifth). The champion earns two and the reserve one.

The following stallions earned points: Great Notion, 11½ points (four shown); Bourbon Courage, 10 points (three shown); Blofeld, 3¼ points (three shown); Uncle Lino, 1¼ points (three shown).

Groom's Awards: Class I, #9, David Martinez; Class II, #10, Taylor Biddinger; Class III, #32, Charles Callahan; Class IV, #15, Amanda Schultz; Championship class, #17, Ann Merryman (champion); #38, Kimberly Myers (reserve).

Amateur judging contest:
Jane Long and Steve Long

Premium award winners from 2022 and 2023 MHBA Yearling shows

The $40,000 MHBA Yearling Show premium is split and distributed twice among the four show contestants who earn the most money as 2- and 3-year-olds. The highest earners of 2024 received $13,000 for first; $4,000, second; $2,000, third; and $1,000, fourth.

Shown in 2022—3-year-olds in 2024

Judge: Jonathan Thomas

Miss Harriett—$195,950
gr./ro.f., Blofeld—Tejano Sea, by Sea of Secrets; shown in Class III by David Baxter. *In 2024:* Won Wide Country S, Miss Disco S, 3rd Weber City Miss S

Pudd'n N Pie—$111,272
dk.b./br.f., Unified—Plum, by Pure Prize; 4th in Class IV, shown by Dark Hollow Farm.

In the Dance—$107,462
b.g., Imagining—Street Waltz, by Street Cry (Ire); shown in Class I by The Stables @ Mezza Luna Farm LLC.

Omar Comin—$86,010
dk.b./br.g., Golden Lad—Great Start, by Jump Start; shown in Class I by Designated Hitters Racing.

Shown in 2023—2-year-olds in 2024

Judge: Ned Allard

Malibu Hooch—$94,425
ch.f., Bourbon Courage—Sunday in Malibu, by Malibu Moon; shown in Class III by Ronald Harris Parker. *In 2024:* 2nd Maryland Million Lassie S

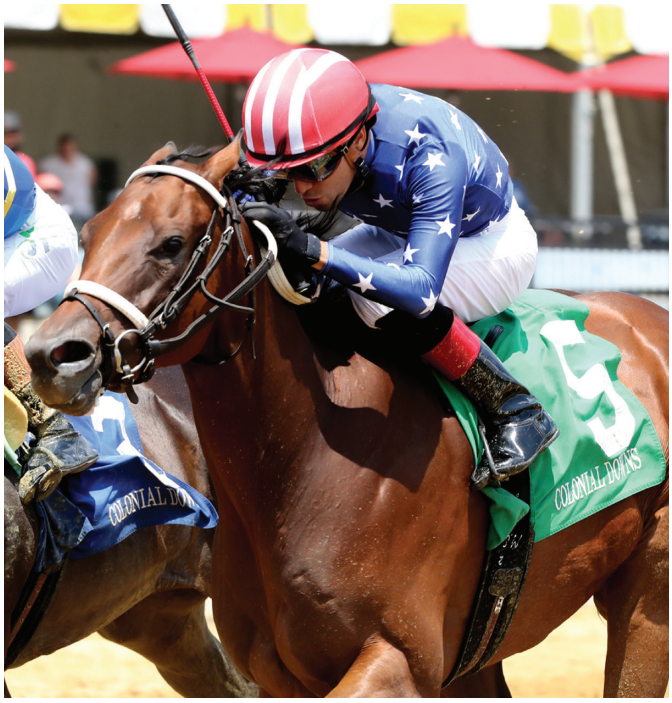
Thundering—$65,638
b.g., Mosler—Keep Right, by Street Cry (Ire); shown in Class I by Jal Dastur. *In 2024:* Won Display S

Kissling—$36,780
b.g., Practical Joke—Flip the Switch, by Discreet Cat; shown in Class II by David W. Palmer.

It's a Shore Thing—$28,590
dk.b./br.f., Honor A. P.—Madison Avenue, by Quality Road; 2nd in Class IV, shown by Dark Hollow Farm.

Maryland-bred Stakes Winners

Just Philtored latest success in Slow and Steady saga



Coady Media

Slow and Steady has done it again. In 2023, at age 22, and the year after she was awarded the Maryland Broodmare of the Year title, the daughter of Malibu Moon delivered a filly by Great Notion for the partnership of trainer Gary Capuano's Non Stop Stable and ZWP Stable. Fast forward two years, and that filly – Just Philtored – is Slow and Steady's 12th winner from 12 starters, and eighth stakes performer, following a win in the $100,000 Keswick Stakes, a 5½-furlong test for Virginia-bred, -sired or -certified 2-year-old fillies Aug. 2 at Colonial Downs.

ZWP Stable's Foard Wilgis and Dave Picarello were longtime Capuano clients, and later partners. The trainer found Slow and Steady, out of the stakes-winning Maryland-bred Cure the Blues mare Salubria, as a yearling at the 2002 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic December sale. Purchased for $14,500, she won or placed in 14 of her 20 starts to earn $123,510 for ZWP.

The long, fruitful partnership has looked different since the passing of Wilgis in May 2022 and Picarello the next January, but ZWP continues as a tribute to the duo. Elliot Campbell, a friend of Picarello's, came in as a partner following Wilgis' death and runs the stable.

Just Philtored, named by combining of the names of Capuano's sons Justin and Phillip and daughter Tori – "Tori came up with the name a couple of years ago," said Capuano – made her debut May 23 at Laurel Park. The partners watched the bay hop out of the gate, get pinched back, settle down the backstretch, gain around the turn to reach the leaders at the top of the stretch and pull away by 8 lengths.

That effort caught the attention of Red White and Blue Racing and London Reid Thoroughbreds, which purchased her and sent her to trainer Mike Trombetta.

The 2-1 favorite in her stakes debut, Just Philtored faced two with equally impressive debut scores – the Great Notion filly Slewperstitus and Cupid filly Smooch Up. Breaking well under Mychel Sanchez, Just Philtored tracked pacesetter Smooch Up behind fractions of :22.76 and :45.67. She made a three-wide move and came into the stretch with a 2-length lead, then fought off a rallying Slewperstitus, who cut the margin to a neck at the wire. The final time was 1:03.82, more than a second faster than juvenile colts ran the distance one race later. The Great Notion $1 exacta paid $3.10. With two wins in two starts, Just Philtored has earned $92,430.

"When she won at first asking pretty nicely, offers started coming in for her," said Capuano. "We decided the price was right. Now she's another stakes winner for the old mare."

Slow and Steady's broodmare career began sensationally when her second foal, Steady Warrior (by ZWP's millionaire Cherokee's Boy), became a Maryland-bred champion. Another stakes winner, Steady N Love, has produced two stakes winners – the 2018 Shackleford gelding Shackled Love and 2022 Vekoma colt It's Hammertime. The latter has won four of five starts, including his sole outing this year, an allowance in April at Laurel in which he defeated Barbadian Runner, Do It for Michael and Saxton. Capuano gave the colt time off for most of the summer and is starting to bring him back. "Hopefully this fall we get him back into gear," he said.

Malibu Beauty is by far the richest earner for Slow and Steady, and recorded her seventh stakes win in Delaware Park's $150,000 Obeah in June. The 7-year-old daughter of Buffum has earned $922,339 in 45 starts, with 14 wins and 16 placings. "Malibu Beauty is getting her million the hard way," said Capuano, as they look to accomplish the feat with a fall campaign.

Slow and Steady and Steady N Love have yearlings by Game Winner. "We breed to sell and if we can't get the price we want, we race," said Capuano. "That's how it's been for the last 10 years. Malibu Beauty ran through the sale and she didn't bring her reserve [she was a $45,000 RNA] and she's been phenomenal. That's kind of the way we operate."

After producing May foals in 2024, neither Slow and Steady nor Steady N Love have foals this year, but both are confirmed in foal. Steady N Love went to Essential Quality; Slow and Steady, now 24, to Arcangelo. "Just checked and [Slow and Steady] is still in foal," said Capuano. "Fingers crossed, knock on wood. She's old but she's tough."

In recent years, the mares have boarded with Tom and Chris Bowman on the Eastern Shore. "The mares foal at the Bowmans and spend half of the year there and half at Lynn Ashby's Marlyn Meadow in Middletown, Del.," said Capuano. "They usually go over in October and stay until they foal. Once they are bred they return to Lynn."

The process continues on, slow and steady. ❧

Maryland Foal Report

Photo gallery by Ellen B. Pons

Country Life Farm partnership mare Fifteen Royals, a daughter of Palace Malice,with her colt by Maximus Mischief.

The second foal out of Tanterra Stables' Kantharos mare Glittering Judy is a colt by Drain the Clock.

Friesan Fire filly bred by a Country Life Farm partnership is out of stakes winner Grecian Maiden (by Ghostzapper).

Colt by Mosler out of Rotate, a daughter of Kentucky Derby winner Orb, was bred by Adele B. Dilschneider.

Flashy Blofeld colt out of Stormy Atlantic's winning daughter Stormy Mistress was bred by Komlo LLC.

Fillies by Mosler (left) and Dialed In are out of Ed Hart's Reachreachreach (by Archarcharch) and Barak Farm's Glackety (by Smoke Glacken), respectively.

Horse of the Year Knicks Go is the sire Tanterra Stables' filly out of the Honor Code mare Determined Honor

Greatest Honour colt out of Missy Rules (by Peace Rules) is a half-brother to two stakes performers, including a $521,797 earner.

Samotowka Stables bred the filly by champion sprinter Mitole out of Yougottabekitten, by Kitten's Joy.

October is Horse Month in Maryland!

Maryland's horse industry is center stage locally and internationally!

The Capital Challenge Horse Show
September 24 - October 5, 2025 Prince George's Equestrian Center
capitalchallenge.org

Celebration of the Horse
Oct 11, 2025 Tuckahoe Equestrian Center
tuckahoeequestriancenter.com

State/National Jousting Championships
State Oct, 4, 2025 Crownsville, National Oct. 11, 2025 Knoxville
marylandjousting.com

Jim McKay Maryland Million Day
Oct. 11, 2025 Laurel Park
marylandmillion.com

MARS Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill
Oct. 16-19, 2025 Fair Hill
maryland5star.us

Washington International Horse Show
Oct 20-26, 2025 Prince George's Equestrian Center
wihs.org

Horse Discovery Centers
Want to meet a horse? Contact the HDC closest to you!
MDA.maryland.gov/horseboard/Pages/horse_board.aspx

New MHBA Board elected, officers chosen for 2025-26

Announced at the July 14 General Membership meeting, the Maryland Horse Breeders Association membership elected four returning, and one new member, to the 2025 Board of Directors. Dictated by MHBA bylaws, the annually held election fills five open seats on the board. Those elected will serve for the next three years.

Returning to the board, after having served in the past, are Richard F. Blue Jr., Christine Holden, Grace Merryman and Kent Allen Murray. Garrett Murray joins the Board for the first time.

• Richard F. Blue Jr. – Owner of Blue & Obrecht Realty LLC and a resident of Baltimore County, Blue first served on the board in 2001 and was last on in 2021 when MHBA president.

• Christine Holden – General manager of Country Life and Merryland Farms, Holden will begin her third three-year term after first being elected in 2018. She was vice-president of the association from 2021 through 2023.

• Grace Merryman – Owner, with husband Louis Merryman, of Anchor & Hope Farm in Cecil County, Merryman will serve her second consecutive three-year term.

•Kent Allen Murray – A program manager for Northrop Grumman Corporation, Murray grew up on his family's Murmur Farm in Darlington in Harford County where he performed all duties associated with farm life. He serves his fourth three-year term on the board, and has been MHBA president since 2022.

• Garrett Murray – Farm manager for family-owned Atlanta Hall Farm in Harford County since 2010, Murray was a former yearling and stallion manager at Castleton Lyons Farm and farm manager and sales at Coolmore America in Kentucky. He has been on the Maryland Steeplechase Association Board of Directors since 2014.

The five join current directors William K. Boniface, Brooke Bowman, Henry "Tim" Clark, Charles Fenwick Jr., Lisa Golden Hofstetter, Michael Horning, Josh Pons, Phil Schoenthal, Thomas Rooney and David Wade.

The MHBA thanks Amy Burk and T.K. Kuegler, who are going off of the Board, for their service over the years.

New Officers for 2025-26

At the Board of Directors' meeting July 28 at the Maryland Horse Breeders Association's office in Reisterstown, the new board elected Richie Blue as president, Josh Pons as vice president and William K. Boniface as secretary/treasurer. ❧

UPCOMING

Maryland Horse Library Events

September 22 • 4-6 PM

Jim McKay, Maryland Million Founder

As the lead-in to the 40th anniversary of Maryland Million, join us for an evening celebrating the life and career of Jim McKay, the respected host of ABC's Wide World of Sports, Triple Crown and Olympic broadcaster and Maryland Million founder. (Featuring the exhibit "The Wider World of Jim McKay")

November 10 • 4-6 PM

Riding To Arms

In recognition of Veterans Day, University of Maryland professor and author Charles Caramello will discuss his book Riding To Arms, A History of Horsemanship and Mounted Warfare.

December 19 • 11-4

Save the date for our annual Holiday Open House!
Enjoy exploring our collection, meeting the staff, and more.

REGISTER FOR EVENTS AT MARYLANDHORSE.COM/EVENTS

Maryland-bred top earners in 2025

(through August 11)

1.	Mindframe	$1,197,220
2.	Seismic Beauty	416,840
3.	Future Is Now	283,500
4.	Barbadian Runner	278,245
5.	Quint's Brew	260,000
6.	Passion Rules	189,600
7.	Safe Trust	172,530
8.	Slam Notion	161,950
9.	Romeo	156,760
10.	Heard On Thestreet	149,652
11.	Speedyness	148,500
12.	Post Time	143,190
13.	Splendora	142,400
14.	Takethemoneyhoney	141,770
15.	Malibu Beauty	141,640
16.	Concrete Faze	138,450
17.	Haileysfirstnotion	131,930
18.	Big Blue Line	126,923
19.	Onyx Ten	123,000
20.	Green Eyed Monster	119,570

Maryland Fund Report

Bonuses paid for races run in April and May 2025 at Maryland tracks

Breeder bonuses

Includes the additional 10 percent Maryland-sired bonus for winners of maiden races, initiated Jan. 1 during the 2022 Laurel winter meet. That bonus is reflected in the second figure earned for the race.

A. Delaperriere Stables LLC—Docsgotallthecandy: April 4, 1st race, $990; April 27, 10th race, $2,970/$990. ($4,950)

Amy H. Daney Bloodstock LLC—Pegster: April 27, 3rd race, $540.

Anchor and Hope Farm Inc. and Copper Penny Stables—Skylar's Brother: April 27, 4th race, $990; May 31, 5th race, $472.50. ($1,462.50)

William Robert Bailes—Anlon: April 25, 4th race, $2,205.

Lorna L. Baker and Thomas H. Michaels Jr.—Third Tuesday: April 5, 9th race, $495.

Barak Farm—Jose Can't Say: May 23, 8th race, $472.50. Kitty's Son: May 4, 7th race, $2,115. Safe Trust: April 12, 2nd race, $8,505. She Is Wisky: May 2, 6th race, $3,240. ($14,332.50)

Barak Farm and Dinos Thoroughbreds LLC—Shkhara Fire: April 12, 2nd race, $2,835. Skip Thru Da Fire: April 4, 7th race, $6,480. Thunder in Paris: April 26, 11th race, $990; May 11, 2nd race, $742.50; May 25, 4th race, $3,240. ($14,287.50)

Barak Farm and Sharon Dodgen—Backnthewoods: May 15, 8th race, $832.50.

Barlar LLC—Call Me Andy: May 10, 5th race, $2,160.

David Baxter Sr.—Miss Harriett: April 27, 9th race, $1,260.

Patricia Beck and Richard C. Beck—Lorraine's Way: May 15, 4th race, $1,080.

Joseph Besecker—Kilo Road: April 27, 2nd race, $1,710; May 31, 9th race, $1,800. Z Bogdan: May 11, 1st race, $4,050/$1,350. ($8,910)

Best A Luck Farm LLC and Best Foot Forward Holdings Inc.—Suremeanttoobe: April 25, 8th race, $1,845; May 24, 9th race, $2,025. ($3,870)

Teresa L. Beste—Navani: April 27, 7th race, $1,080.

Big Lick Farm and Erin Atkiss—Knockanara: May 24, 9th race, $6,075.

Black Cloud Racing LLC—She's a Gem: April 5, 9th race, $2,970/$990; April 26, 11th race, $2,970. ($6,930)

Black Fox Farm—Remembering Wilbur: May 10, 6th race, $3,375.

James A. Blackwell—Tom Hagen: April 25, 7th race, $3,240.

Richard F. Blue Jr.—The Last Scip: May 9, 7th race, $1,305; May 25, 8th race, $652.50. ($1,957.50)

Bonita Farm—Hittheroadjak: April 4, 5th race, $1,260. Juniper Juice: May 3, 9th race, $1,080. Mamba Mindset: April 4, 1st race, $495. ($2,835)

Frank A. Bonsal Jr.—Mantua Man: May 23, 6th race, $922.50.

Charles Bonuccelli—Roll On Jesse: April 12, 4th race, $6,615.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman—Canadian Bear: May 23, 1st race, $1,350. Talk to the Judge: May 23, 7th race, $1,192.50. ($2,542.50)

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman and Dr. Brooke Bowman—Feelin So Lucky: April 6, 3rd race, $675.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman, Dr. Brooke Bowman and Estate of Milton P. Higgins III—Post Time: May 3, 6th race, $7,560.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman and Rebecca Davis—Pneumo Warrior: April 11, 2nd race, $1,057.50; May 15, 6th race, $2,115. ($3,172.50)

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman, Rebecca Davis and Dr. Brooke Bowman—Mopo: April 25, 5th race, $2,115; May 16, 2nd race, $7,020/$2,340. ($11,475)

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman and Estate of Milton P. Higgins III—Carvellian Quest: April 6, 7th race, $1,080; May 2, 8th race, $2,160. ($3,240)

Bowman and Higgins Stable—Don't Tell Deren: May 15, 3rd race, $1,305. Holy Fit: May 10, 3rd race, $1,080. ($2,385)

Matthew Bright—Brighty: May 15, 7th race, $675.

Burning Daylight Farm Inc.—Instparty: April 27, 8th race, $540.

William Andrew Campbell—Bad Temper: May 4, 5th race, $810; May 23, 2nd race, $348.75. ($1,158.75)

Melissa Cantacuzene—Better Watch It: April 25, 1st race, $1,710.

Louis C. Carrico—Nancy Mary: April 4, 4th race, $1,845; April 25, 2nd race, $922.50. ($2,767.50)

Wes Carter—El Divino Nino: April 11, 3rd race, $4,050. Had to Have Him: May 31, 6th race, $7,155. ($11,205)

Climax Stallions LLC—Pozo: May 15, 1st race, $1,080.

Clover Hill Farm Inc.—All Fruits Ripe: April 6, 8th race, $990; April 18, 5th race, $540. Mucho Tigger: April 6, 1st race, $990; May 2, 4th race, $2,970. Notmyfirstrodeo: April 13, 2nd race, $990. ($6,480)

Clover Hill Racing LLC—Super Needy: May 25, 2nd race, $945.

Sam Cockburn—Tuff Luck: May 23, 5th race, $3,510.

Cordelia Stables LLC—Krissi N: April 25, 2nd race, $5,535.

Cottonwood Stable LLC—Seven's Eleven: April 12, 8th race, $2,250. Seven's Magic: May 4, 1st race, $675. Wicked Melissa: April 12, 1st race, $495. ($3,420)

Country Life Farm and Grecian Maiden LLC—Schrader: April 5, 7th race, $5,535; May 26, 4th race, $1,350. ($6,885)

Country Life Farm and Missy Rules LLC—Missy's Map: May 3, 10th race, $495.

Country Life Farm and Real Good Time LLC—Bill of Rights: May 25, 6th race, $652.50.

Country Life Farm and Sister State LLC—Lady Ensign: April 19, 1st race, $5,130.

Country Life Farm and Starr of Quality LLC—Fulmineo: April 19, 10th race, $2,250.

Country Roads Ltd.—My Flicker: May 23, 7th race, $2,385. Utterly Enchanting: April 5, 4th race, $405; May 4, 5th race, $405; May 23, 2nd race, $697.50. ($3,892.50)

Daniel C. Crowley and Non Stop Stable—Haileysfirstnotion: April 26, 9th race, $7,155.

Dark Hollow Farm—Grey Biggsy: May 26, 7th race, $922.50. Stormy Hollow: April 27, 4th race, $2,970/$990. Whiskeyinthejaro: May 31, 1st race, $1,800. ($6,682.50)

Rebecca B. Davis—Great Andrei: May 11, 6th race, $6,615.

John C. Davison—Romeo: May 3, 2nd race, $6,345.

Designated Hitters Racing—Daddy Yankee: April 13, 6th race, $990; May 4, 3rd race, $990. Tik Tok Daddy: May 26, 5th race, $1,080. ($3,060)

George L. Doetsch—Big Wanda: April 19, 1st race, $1,710. Straight to Water: May 16, 1st race, $1,215. ($2,925)

Annette Eubanks and Daniel Eubanks—Band Camp: May 17, 1st race, $2,610.

Finale Farm and Mr. and Mrs. David Moose—Nick's Notion: May 24, 5th race, $2,160.

Finale Farm, Mr. and Mrs. D. David Moose and Lone Pond Farm LLC—Rick'swarmheart: April 13, 2nd race, $495.

Flying H Stables LLC—Conceptualize: May 11, 9th race, $922.50. Tell 'Em I'm Comin: April 4, 3rd race, $1,845. ($2,767.50)

Paul L. Fowler Jr.—Intrepid Dream: May 4, 9th race, $2,520.

Charles A. Frock—Tam Char: April 5, 4th race, $2,430.

Robert E. Gamber—I Can Do It: April 11, 4th race, $3,240; May 31, 2nd race, $652.50. ($3,892.50)

Robert J. Gerczak—Uncle Grey: April 6, 4th race, $675; May 31, 5th race, $2,835. ($3,510)

Glenangus Farm LLC—First Pearl: May 15, 2nd race, $742.50.

Greenspring Mares LLC—Doesn'thurttoflirt: May 24, 5th race, $6,480.

Richard J. Hackerman—Elfuegomasbrilante: April 18, 5th race, $3,240; May 11, 7th race, $1,350. Lachicafortequila: April 26, 2nd race, $675. ($5,265)

Maria M. Haire—Get Like Mike: April 11, 1st race, $495. Neolithica: April 4, 7th race, $2,160; May 10, 10th race, $3,240. Play Harder: April 26, 9th race, $2,385; May 31, 6th race, $2,385. She Be Hoppin: May 2, 2nd race, $990. ($11,655)

Michael J. Harrison DVM—Cluck Cluck: April 6, 3rd race, $1,350; April 27, 7th race, $6,480. ($7,830)

Herringswell Stables Ltd.—Anotherhope: April 13, 3rd race, $1,350.

HH Stables LLC—Cross of Valor: May 9, 6th race, $922.50; May 31, 3rd race, $2,115. ($3,037.50)

James Hibbert—Cactus: April 26, 8th race, $3,240; May 10, 8th race, $10,125. ($13,365)

Hillwood Stable LLC—Foggy Dew: April 4, 3rd race, $5,535/$1,845; May 2, 8th race, $1,080; May 24, 8th race, $1,102.50. ($9,562.50)

Timothy N. Hopkins—Blo By'em: April 5, 3rd race, $1,845; April 25, 8th race, $5,535/$1,845. ($9,225)

Michael and Debbie Horning—My Sugar Boo: April 6, 1st race, $495; May 2, 4th race, $990. ($1,485)

Jagger Inc.—Berks: May 4, 10th race, $2,700. Brightness: April 18, 6th race, $1,845. Fitness: May 15, 2nd race, $4,455. Rowsie Express: April 5, 8th race, $1,102.50; April 26, 7th race, $2,205. Speedyness: April 12, 5th race, $4,500. ($16,807.50)

Jagger Inc. and Super C Racing Inc.—Derbyness: May 2, 8th race, $6,480.

Jet Black LLC—Stars Align: May 9, 5th race, $922.50.

Estate of R. Larry Johnson—Call Another Play: May 4, 9th race, $1,260. Coringa: April 26, 5th race, $6,615; May 25, 7th race, $2,160. Energy Efficient: April 19, 12th race, $405. Great Heavens: April 6, 7th race, $2,160; May 31, 7th race, $1,080. Heard On Thestreet: April 6, 7th race, $6,480; April 25, 9th race, $6,615. Medagooch: April 26, 4th race, $1,710; May 9, 3rd race, $4,050. Mr Jefferson: May 10, 9th race, $3,240. Nineteenamendment: April 19, 7th race, $13,500. Quit Quay: April 6, 3rd race, $4,050; May 23, 2nd race, $2,092.50. Whenigettoheaven: April 19, 8th race, $2,250. Zip Line to Heaven: May 16, 4th race, $1,215. ($58,882.50)

Hope Haskell Jones—Moon Cache: April 19, 9th race, $2,250.

Karmac Stables LLC—Frosty Maya: May 15, 9th race, $1,080. Prado Road: April 25, 9th race, $2,205. ($3,285)

Kasey K Racing Stable—Takethemoneyhoney: April 13, 7th race, $7,155.

Harry Kassap LLC—High View: April 27, 3rd race, $3,240/$1,080. Magical Mondays: May 26, 1st race, $6,075/$2,025. ($12,420)

Carol A. Kaye—Elon: April 26, 6th race, $922.50; May 24, 9th race, $1,012.50. ($1,935)

Timothy L. Keefe—Watch Me Disappear: April 27, 8th race, $1,080.

Dr. Megan Kerford DVM and Justin J. Nixon—Reggie Runs Rogue: April 13, 8th race, $2,835. Sheilahs Warcloud: April 19, 6th race, $1,192.50. ($4,027.50)

Owen Kiernan—Ade: April 4, 4th race, $922.50.

Komlo LLC—Upsidedown Man: May 26, 5th race, $3,240.

Lady Olivia at North Cliff LLC—Blame the Tux: April 18, 9th race, $1,192.50. Bossy Boots: May 24, 1st race, $3,240. Fortune Hill: May 24, 2nd race, $1,480.50; May 3, 2nd race, $1,480.50. Holy Synchronicity: May 4, 2nd race, $1,665; May 25, 6th race, $3,915. Italiano Kid: May 11, 5th race, $1,080. ($14,053.50)

James Lee Lawrence II and Lawrence Stables Inc.—My Mamba: April 4, 2nd race, $810; April 25, 11th race, $810. ($1,620)

Estate of Fred T. Lewis Sr. DVM—Celtic Contender: May 17, 4th race, $2,250. Katie's Notion: April 25, 10th race, $1,102.50. ($3,352.50)

Little Man Farm—Benny Havens: May 10, 5th race, $6,480. Falcon Blue: April 4, 3rd race, $922.50; April 25, 8th race, $922.50. Tidewater: May 16, 6th race, $1,305. ($9,630)

Eric Y. Long—Mission Artemis: April 25, 1st race, $5,130.

Kenneth F. Lowe Jr.—Ifeelbadforyouson: May 4, 6th race, $495; May 26, 2nd race, $472.50. ($967.50)

LRM Stable LLC—Gold Digging Broad: April 13, 7th race, $2,385.

Make My Day Stable—Agent Kelly: May 11, 5th race, $3,240/$1,080. ($4,320)

Estate of Robert T. Manfuso—Catch the Kitten: May 2, 6th race, $540. Dazzy: April 4, 7th race, $1,080; April 27, 7th race, $2,160. ($3,780)

Robert T. Manfuso, Katharine M. Voss and Casey J. Randall—Twice Gold: April 13, 6th race, $495; May 4, 3rd race, $495. ($990)

Marathon Farm Inc.—Abuelo Paps: May 9, 2nd race, $2,430; May 31, 4th race, $540. Real Talented: May 9, 9th race, $990. ($3,960)

Mary E. Eppler Racing Stable—Paperback Edition: April 5, 9th race, $990; May 15, 4th race, $3,240/$1,080. ($5,310)

James F. McIngvale—Fortheloveofrun: April 13, 1st race, $675.

Ann W. Merryman—Seap: May 10, 1st race, $675; May 25, 5th race, $1,080. ($1,755)

Ann Warfield Merryman and Richard F. Blue Jr.—Gift of Gab: May 16, 11th race, $2,250.

Elizabeth M. Merryman—Enzo: April 19, 3rd race, $2,115; May 23, 6th race, $5,535/$1,845. ($9,495)

Mezza Luna Farm LLC—In the Dance: May 24, 8th race, $2,205. Just Great: April 13, 9th race, $495. ($2,700)

Mike Dalton LLC—Quincannon: April 6, 6th race, $405.

Mikelle Farm—True Sunshine: April 11, 4th race, $1,080.
Bryan B. Minnich—King's River: April 4, 6th race, $1,080; April 25, 7th race, $1,080; May 10, 7th race, $10,125. ($12,285)
Kevin P. Morgan—Mavilus: May 24, 6th race, $832.50.
Murmur Farm—Bold Diversion: May 31, 7th race, $2,160. Meg: April 5, 3rd race, $5,535/$1,845. ($9,540)
Nancy Lee Farms—Worth a Dime: May 23, 4th race, $6,075/$2,025. ($8,100)
Northwoods Stable—Mission North: May 25, 7th race, $6,480.
No Guts No Glory Farm—Bigdaddysboy: April 18, 10th race, $810. Irish Hero: April 18, 10th race, $2,430. Itsamonstamash: April 4, 4th race, $5,535. Marriedtothegame: May 23, 3rd race, $1,480.50. ($10,255.50)
Clarke Ohrstrom—Granuaile: May 23, 4th race, $1,012.50.
Old Dominion Thoroughbreds and KMR Racing Stable—Nothingbutbluesky: May 26, 1st race, $2,025.
David W. Palmer—Preparefortakeoff: May 17, 5th race, $7,290.
Ronald Harris Parker—Malibu Hooch: April 12, 2nd race, $1,417.50.
Parkinson and Goodrich LLC—Chesapeake Dream: April 25, 4th race, $1,102.50.
Frank A. Perri Jr.—Dwelling Legacy: April 27, 2nd race, $855.
A. Leonard Pineau—Crossland: May 16, 3rd race, $1,305.
Dr. and Mrs. A. Leonard Pineau—Change My World: April 12, 4th race, $2,205. Rapidity: April 11, 3rd race, $1,350; May 9, 4th race, $675. ($4,230)
Joel Politi—Bosserati: May 16, 11th race, $13,500.
Mr. and Mrs. A. John Price—Sheezahotmess: May 24, 4th race, $472.50.
Valter J. Ramos—Ready for Magic: April 18, 6th race, $5,535.
R.D.M. Racing Stable—Enduring Gold: April 26, 6th race, $5,535.
Timothy J. Rooney—Pietrelcina: May 26, 1st race, $1,012.50.
Shamrock Farm—Barbadian Runner: April 13, 8th race, $1,417.50.
Timothy J. Shaw and Alicia Morgan—Bump N Run: April 11, 7th race, $1,260.
Sinatra Thoroughbred Racing and Breeding LLC—Autumn in Vermont: May 3, 8th race, $1,350.
Hamilton A. Smith—Flatbed Ford: April 27, 10th race, $495.
James Claude Smith Jr.—Claudee Boy: May 10, 5th race, $1,080.
South Branch Equine LLC—Sharmin: May 25, 5th race, $540.
Matt Spencer and Kelly Cox—Anita Beer: May 9, 6th race, $1,845; May 31, 3rd race, $1,057.50. ($2,902.50)
James B. Steele Jr.—Divining Smile: April 18, 3rd race, $1,710.
Super C Racing Inc.—Dine and Dash: April 6, 1st race, $2,970; May 11, 2nd race, $4,455. Tetched: April 13, 4th race, $1,350. Tuned to the Moon: April 18, 2nd race, $2,205; May 11, 6th race, $2,205. ($13,185)
Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds LLC—Addy's Laddy T N T: April 4, 6th race, $3,240; May 10, 6th race, $10,125. All Gas No Brakes: May 24, 5th race, $1,080. Feeling Woozy: May 3, 6th race, $1,260. Formal Affair: April 25, 6th race, $495. Lovely Charm: May 11, 8th race, $1,192.50. Northern Glow: May 11, 8th race, $7,155. ($24,547.50)
Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds LLC and Ellen Charles—Society Ball: May 31, 9th race, $5,400.
The Elkstone Group LLC—Alvy: April 5, 1st race, $540. Cap Com: April 18, 8th race, $7,155. Cocktails at Noon: May 3, 9th race, $6,480; May 25, 3rd race, $1,102.50. Gotts Got It: April 4, 2nd race, $405. Prince of Portland: May 25, 2nd race, $472.50. Vax a Nation: April 26, 5th race, $2,205. Yo Adrian: April 25, 3rd race, $2,115; May 23, 4th race, $2,025. ($22,500)
Thornmar Farm LLC—At First Sight: April 12, 3rd race, $405. Born Charmer: April 5, 6th race, $990; May 2, 2nd race, $2,970/$990. Fair Trade: April 19, 4th race, $1,170; May 25, 4th race, $540. Fear Nothing: April 26, 4th race, $855. General Maximus: April 6, 8th race, $2,970. Little Bit Risky: April 18, 4th race, $585. Please Marry Me: May 3, 4th race, $990. Tall Order: April 25, 10th race, $6,615. Thataway: May 3, 9th race, $2,160; May 25, 7th race, $1,080. The Wolfman: April 4, 2nd race, $2,430; May 31, 4th race, $1,080. Weekend Wife: April 11, 8th race, $5,535/$1,845. Worker Bee: May 24, 2nd race, $8,883. ($42,093)
2500 Determined Holdings—Grayson's Girl: April 11, 2nd race, $6,345; May 11, 6th race, $1,102.50. New King: April 12, 8th race, $4,500. Rye Diggitydog: May 3, 1st race, $3,240. ($15,187.50)
Two Legends Farm—Devil Pays in Gold: April 19, 6th race, $2,385; May 23, 7th race, $7,155. ($9,540)
Walter N. Vieser II—Severn Run: April 13, 1st race, $4,050. Spirit and Truth: May 15, 4th race, $540. ($4,590)
Katharine Merryman Voss—Viennese Waltz: April 5, 5th race, $4,995; May 11, 8th race, $2,385. ($7,380)
Susan Wantz—Gatto Be Proud: April 25, 1st race, $855; May 11, 3rd race, $4,050. On a Proud Note: April 5, 6th race, $2,970; May 25, 4th race, $1,080. ($8,955)
Warning Drums Racing LLC—Happy This Day: May 9, 5th race, $1,845. Radiant Tones: April 27, 3rd race, $1,080. ($2,925)
Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC and Greenspring Mares LLC—Pull No Punches: May 3, 4th race, $495.
Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC, Greenspring Mares LLC and Connie S. Black—This Is Good: April 26, 3rd race, $855.
Winding Creek Farm and Anchor and Hope Farm—Girl Gone Wild: April 12, 1st race, $2,970/$990. ($3,960)
WWCD LLC—Danni's Rhythm: April 18, 6th race, $922.50; May 9, 6th race, $5,535/$1,845. ($8,302.50)
ZWP Stable and Non Stop Stable—It's Hammertime: April 13, 8th race, $8,505. Just Philtored: May 23, 3rd race, $8,883. Let's Go Lando: May 24, 2nd race, $2,115. Malibu Beauty: May 4, 9th race, $7,560. ($27,063)

Stallion bonuses

ALLIANCE (Agent Kelly: May 11, 5th race, $1,080): Lawrence Karp
BANDBOX (Band Camp: May 17, 1st race, $870. Seven's Eleven: April 12, 8th race, $750. The Wolfman: April 4, 2nd race, $810; May 31, 4th race, $360): Northview Stallion Station—$2,790.
BARBADOS (Barbadian Runner: April 13, 8th race, $472.50. Falcon Blue: April 4, 3rd race, $307.50; April 25, 8th race, $307.50): Shamrock Farm—$1,087.50.
BLOFELD (Better Watch It: April 25, 1st race, $570. Blo By'em: April 5, 3rd race, $615; April 25, 8th race, $1,845. Bold Diversion: May 31, 7th race, $720. Cross of Valor: May 9, 6th race, $307.50; May 31, 3rd race, $705. Dwelling Legacy: April 27, 2nd race, $285. Meg: April 5, 3rd race, $1,845. Miss Harriett: April 27, 9th race, $420. Weekend Wife: April 11, 8th race, $1,845): Blofeld Syndicate—$9,157.50.
BOURBON COURAGE (All Fruits Ripe: April 6, 8th race, $330; April 18, 5th race, $180. Girl Gone Wild: April 12, 1st race, $990. Malibu Hooch: April 12, 2nd race, $472.50. Skylar's Brother: April 27, 4th race, $330; May 31, 5th race, $157.50): Bourbon Courage Syndicate—$2,460.
BUFFUM (Malibu Beauty: May 4, 9th race, $2,520. Quincannon: April 6, 6th race, $135): Buffum Syndicate—$2,655.
DESPITE THE ODDS (Utterly Enchanting: April 5, 4th race, $135; May 4, 5th race, $135; May 23, 2nd race, $232.50): Estate of R. Larry Johnson—$502.50
DIVINING ROD (Dazzy: April 4, 7th race, $360; April 27, 7th race, $720. Divining Smile: April 18, 3rd race, $570. Fear Nothing: April 26, 4th race, $285. Straight to Water: May 16, 1st race, $405): Divining Rod Syndicate—$2,340.
EDITORIAL (Pozo: May 15, 1st race, $360): Climax Stallions LLC.
ENGAGE (Marriedtothegame: May 23, 3rd race, $352.50): Northview Stallion Station Inc.
FIRST MONDAYS (First Pearl: May 15, 2nd race, $247.50. High View: April 27, 3rd race, $1,080. Magical Mondays: May 26, 1st race, $2,025): First Mondays Partnership—$3,352.50.
FORCE THE PASS (Had to Have Him: May 31, 6th race, $2,385): Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC.
FORTUNE TICKET (Fortune Hill: May 3, 2nd race, $352.50; May 24, 2nd race, $352.50): Climax Stallions LLC—$705
FRIESAN FIRE (Anita Beer: May 9, 6th race, $615; May 31, 3rd race, $352.50. Shkhara Fire: April 12, 2nd race, $945. Skip Thru Da Fire: April 4, 7th race, $2,160): Friesan Fire Syndicate—$4,072.50.
GOLDEN LAD (Addy's Laddy T N T: April 4, 6th race, $1,080; May 10, 6th race, $3,375. Danni's Rhythm: April 18, 6th race, $307.50; May 9, 6th race, $1,845. Itsamonstamash: April 4, 4th race, $1,845. Prado Road: April 25, 9th race, $735. Quit Quay: April 6, 3rd race, $1,350; May 23, 2nd race, $697.50. Remembering Wilbur: May 10, 6th race, $1,125. Rowsie Express: April 5, 8th race, $367.50; April 26, 7th race, $735. She's a Gem: April 5, 9th race, $990; April 26, 11th race, $990. Takethemoneyhoney: April 13, 7th race, $2,385. Talk to the Judge: May 23, 7th race, $397.50. Twice Gold: April 13, 6th race, $165; May 4, 3rd race, $165): Golden Lad Syndicate—$18,555.
GREAT NOTION (At First Sight: April 12, 3rd race, $135. Brightness: April 18, 6th race, $615. Elon: April 26, 6th race, $307.50; May 24, 9th race, $337.50. Enzo: April 19, 3rd race, $705; May 23, 6th race, $1,845. Great Heavens: April 6, 7th race, $720; May 31, 7th race, $360. Haileysfirstnotion: April 26, 9th race, $2,385. Just Great: April 13, 9th race, $165. Just Philtored: May 23, 3rd race, $2,115. Katie's Notion: April 25, 10th race, $367.50. Little Bit Risky: April 18, 4th race, $195. Mopo: April 25, 5th race, $705; May 16, 2nd race, $2,340. My Flicker: May 23, 7th race, $795. Nick's Notion: May 24, 5th race, $720. Society Ball: May 31, 9th race, $1,800. Speedyness: April 12, 5th race, $1,500. Stormy Hollow: April 27, 4th race, $990. Tam Char: April 5, 4th race, $810. Tetched: April 13, 4th race, $450. Third Tuesday: April 5, 9th race, $165. Upsidedown Man: May 26, 5th race, $1,080. Watch Me Disappear: April 27, 8th race, $360): Great Notion Syndicate—$21,967.50.
HOLY BOSS (Blame the Tux: April 18, 9th race, $397.50. Bosserati: May 16, 11th race, $4,500. Crossland: May 16, 3rd race, $435. Granuaile: May 23, 4th race, $337.50. Holy Synchronicity: May 4, 2nd race, $555; May 25, 6th race, $1,305. Italiano Kid: May 11, 5th race, $360. Mantua Man: May 23, 6th race, $307.50. Seap: May 10, 1st race, $225; May 25, 5th race, $360. Worker Bee: May 24, 2nd race, $2,115): Holy Boss Syndicate—$10,897.50.
HOPPERTUNITY (Ade: April 4, 4th race, $307.50. All Gas No Brakes: May 24, 5th race, $360. Docsgotallthecandy: April 4, 1st race, $330; April 27, 10th race, $990. Fair Trade: April 19, 4th race, $390; May 25, 4th race, $180. She Be Hoppin: May 2, 2nd race, $330): Northview Stallion Station Inc.—$2,887.50.
IMAGINING (Bigdaddysboy: April 18, 10th race, $270. El Divino Nino: April 11, 3rd race, $1,350. In the Dance: May 24, 8th race, $735): Imagining Syndicate—$2,355.
IRISH WAR CRY (Born Charmer: April 5, 6th race, $330; May 2, 2nd race, $990. Celtic Contender: May 17, 4th race, $750. Feeling Woozy: May 3, 6th race, $420. Foggy Dew: April 4, 3rd race, $1,845; May 2, 8th race, $360; May 24, 8th race, $367.50. Irish Hero: April 18, 10th race, $810. King's River: April 4, 6th race, $360; April 25, 7th race, $360; May 10, 7th race, $3,375. Lovely Charm: May 11, 8th race, $397.50. Tuned to the Moon: April 18, 2nd race, $735; May 11, 6th race, $735. Whiskeyinthejaro: May 31, 1st race, $600): Northview Stallion Station Inc.—$12,435.
KOBE'S BACK (Hittheroadjak: April 4, 5th race, $420. Juniper Juice: May 3, 9th race, $360. Mamba Mindset: April 4, 1st race, $165. My Mamba: April 4, 2nd race, $270; April 25, 11th race, $270): Bonita Farm—$1,485.
LONG RIVER (Bossy Boots: May 24, 1st race, $1,080): Long River Syndicate.
MADEFROMLUCKY (Feelin So Lucky: April 6, 3rd race, $225. Sheilahs Warcloud: April 19, 6th race, $397.50. Tuff Luck: May 23, 5th race, $1,170): Madefromlucky Syndicate—$1,792.50.
MOSLER (Moon Cache: April 19, 9th race, $750. Safe Trust: April 12, 2nd race, $2,835. Sharmin: May 25, 5th race, $180. Worth a Dime: May 23, 4th race, $2,025): Mosler Syndicate—$5,790.
OUTFLANKER (Benny Havens: May 10, 5th race, $2,160. Tidewater: May 16, 6th race, $435): Outflanker Syndicate—$2,595.
SCIPION (The Last Scip: May 9, 7th race, $435; May 25, 8th race, $217.50): Scipion Syndicate—$652.50.
STREET MAGICIAN (Heard On Thestreet: April 6, 7th race, $2,160; April 25, 9th race, $2,205. Seven's Magic: May 4, 1st race, $225. Whenigettoheaven: April 19, 8th race, $750): Estate of R. Larry Johnson—$5,340.
SUPER NINETY NINE (Bad Temper: May 4, 5th race, $270; May 23, 2nd race, $116.25. Dine and Dash: April 6, 1st race, $990; May 11, 2nd race, $1,485. Ifeelbadforyouson: May 4, 6th race, $165; May 26, 2nd race, $157.50. Paperback Edition: April 5, 9th race, $330; May 15, 4th race, $1,080. Super Needy: May 25, 2nd race, $315): Country Life Farm—$4,908.75.
UNCLE LINO (Mission Artemis: April 25, 1st race, $1,710. Z Bogdan: May 11, 1st race, $1,350): Northview Stallion Station—$3,060.

Registration questions? Membership inquiries?
Call Emily Stakem at 410.252.2100 x 129
Maryland Fund questions?
Call Nicole Hart-Richardson at 410.252.2100 x 128

THE THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY NEWSLETTER

Post Time

- News, views and insights that matter to breeders, owners and racing industry professionals - **September 2025** -

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Eclipse Award? Breeders' Cup Sprint Win? As hot as Book'em Danno is, why not?

By Bill Finley

The Book'em Danno story has always been a good one, and it still is. But the narrative has changed. This is no longer about a plucky New Jersey-bred with the clever name who wins a race here and there. It's about a genuine star.

COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Book'em Danno wins the Grade 2 Vanderbilt at Saratoga in July.

"Danno" did it again in mid-July at Saratoga, winning the Grade 2 Alfred G. Vanderbilt Stakes at Saratoga by 2½ lengths. It was his ninth win from 15 career starts and his seventh stakes win. His three graded stakes victories have come at Saratoga and he has career earnings of $1,580,425.

"We're so fortunate to be in this position and we are enjoying the ride," said Jay Briscione, who heads Atlantic Six Racing, a group of six friends from the Jersey Shore who are partners on the horse. "But we are aware how fragile these horses are. Look at what happened to (Met Mile winner) Raging Torrent, who came down with a suspensory injury. You can't get too far ahead of yourself, and I think that is what (Trainer) Derek (Ryan) is saying, too. An Eclipse Award would be the culmination of everything he has accomplished, and that would be spectacular. And, for us, the owners. who would have ever imagined that we'd even be in the conversation for an Eclipse Award?"

After winning the Grade 3 True North in his previous start, Book'em Danno looked like he was going to be hard to beat in the Vanderbilt. With Paco Lopez aboard and bet down to 7-5 favoritism, he had few anxious moments, taking over in mid-stretch before drawing clear.

"Yes, I think it was his best race ever," trainer

Derek Ryan said. "He came into this race the best he has ever come into a race. In the end, he was pretty dominant. He won on the bridle in the end. He just put in a big, big effort. He is so consistent, which is remarkable. You always hope that as a 4-year-old they get a little stronger and they get a little faster. You look at his sheet, and that's exactly what is happening. It's just a blessing."

Though the connections are "taking it one race at a time," there's no reason why they can't dream a little bit. The next start considered was the Grade 1 Forego at Saratoga near the end of August.

"He's run in three stakes this year and his races are getting better," Briscione said. "In the Vanderbilt he got to run on a fast track for the first time in three races. He got a 111 Beyer and that's a stratosphere kind of thing. He loves it in Saratoga."

Should he win the Forego, the connections will have some tough choices to make. Ryan, for one, is not necessarily a big Breeders' Cup fan.

"I don't think it makes sense to pay a lot of money to run in that race," Ryan said of the $60,000 entry fee that would have to be paid to run Danno in the Breeders' Cup Sprint. "There are plenty of other good races around the country."

COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Book'em Danno captured the Grade 3 True North at Saratoga in June.

Ever since Book'em Danno ran second in the 2024 Saudi Derby-G3, Ryan has wanted to go back to the Middle East. He has his eye on the 2026 $20 million Grade 1 Saudi Cup. The problem is that the race is at a mile-and-an-eighth and Book'em Danno has never won beyond 7 furlongs.

"A good horse will do anything you want, 6 furlongs, 7 furlongs," Ryan said. "I could get him to go a mile and an eighth no problem, especially in the Saudi Cup. It's one turn and it's worth an awful lot of money. He'll have no problem going a mile and an eighth."

Briscione is more bullish on the Breeders' Cup Sprint than his trainer is.

"As far as the Breeders' Cup being a target, you have to take it as it comes," Briscione said. "If we're fortunate enough that he's healthy and running the same kind of way, the Breeders' Cup would always be an option. He's run hard and fast every time, but we haven't over-raced him."

Another race that will surely come under consideration is the Sept. 27 Vosburgh at Aqueduct, and that's because it is a "Win and You're In" race for the Sprint. Should Danno win that race, the $60,000 entry fee will be paid by the Breeders' Cup, plus there is a $10,000 travel allowance to offset the costs of shipping.

For Briscione and his five partners, it's been a ride they never dreamt was possible. And the horse is only 4, is a gelding, and appears to be perfectly sound. This story may be far from over.

"When we bought this horse, we were hoping for a Jersey-bred horse that could go through his conditions. That's all," Briscione said. "He's turned into a dynamo. The way he cranks these races out he's incredible to watch. He's as consistent as any horse I've seen this year. He seems to be a horse where people can get on the bandwagon. The owners, we're a fun story, too, because it shows that the little guy can compete at the top level. You just need to have a little luck."

New Jersey's version of Kelso, it's He'spuregold

By Bill Finley

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

There are many reasons that Kelso is considered one of the best horses of the 20th century, but the ones that stand out are his class, consistency and durability. Back when the Jockey Club Gold Cup was still considered one of the most important races on the calender, Kelso won it five years in a row, from 1960 through 1964. It's considered one of the greatest feats in racing history.

It would seem that that accomplishment–winning the same stakes race five years in a row–would be beyond the reach of the modern Thoroughbred. How many horses today even last five years? Not many. It's not what horses do anymore.

Then there's the New Jersey-bred He'spuregold.

The 7-year-old Vancouver (Aus) gelding who is owned by and was bred by John Bowers' Roseland Farm Stable celebrated the July 4 holiday weekend in style by winning his fifth straight Irish

War Cry Handicap, a grass race restricted to New Jersey breds.

"John stopped by the barn this morning and said you seemed really excited about the race yesterday," trainer Kelly Breen said. "I said, 'Do you realize what your horse just did? He won the same race five years in a row.' It's unheard of. It's incredible."

Way back in October 2020, He'spuregold made his debut finishing third in a maiden race at Keeneland while going off at odds of 70-1. Six starts later, he broke his maiden in a Jersey-bred race at Monmouth in June 2021. Breen knew what he had, a horse with a lot of potential but one that also had ankle issues.

"We've had some ankle problems with him and they are just as bad now that he's 7 years old as they were when he was he was 3," Breen said. "He's had those issues, so we've worked hard to keep the problems in check. He's made his visits to Patty Hogan and he has had surgery. But he keeps going. He's a warrior."

"Kelly is over the moon," Bowers said. "Kelly appreciates what he's done, with the five straight wins. We bred the horse in hopes that he'd be a good grass horse and he's always run great on the grass. The Irish War Cry is a New Jersey-bred race on the grass, so when he won it the first two times I wasn't really that surprised. Winning it five times in a row is really a thrill. It's something to be proud of."

He'spuregold won the race for the first time as a 3-year-old in 2021. Breen tried him in a couple of graded, open races, but he wasn't up to the challenge. So it was right back to the Irish War Cry, which, as a 4-year-old, he won by 2½ lengths. He picked up his only career win on the dirt when capturing the 2022 Charles Hesse III at Monmouth for Jersey-breds. And he would go on to beat a tough field of allowance runners in 2023 at Gulfstream. He lost his next three starts, but the 2024 Irish War Cry awaited. With Paco Lopez, his regular rider throughout his career aboard, he had to fight this time, winning by just a neck over One Time Willard (Micromange), who is also trained by Breen.

The secret to his success?

"His demeanor helps," Breen said. "He's a pleasure to be around. He's overall just a nice horse. He's nice to be around. He's a classy horse. It's hard to put into words sometimes, but he's nice to be around, nice to train. He's the best athlete on your sports team. My son plays hockey. It's like training Gretzky. My style of training really fits with him. I tell them to go out there and work a half-mile in 48 flat and he does it. He is the perfect athlete."

He beat open company in the 2024 Red Bank Stakes, but that would be his last win coming into the 2025 Irish War Cry. This time he won by three-quarters of a length over the same One Time Willard.

"You have to give Kelly a lot of credit because the horse has had ankle issues since he was 3," Bowers said. "Kelly has kept the horse going. One thing Kelly said to me is that the horse runs easily once he starts running. That's what kept him in high class races for so long."

The 2025 Irish War Cry win upped his career earnings to $687,170. He's won 10 races, five of them being the Irish War Cry.

There won't be a sixth straight. Though He'spuregold is obviously still on top of his game, Bowers doesn't want to assume any of the risks that come with campaigning an 8-year-old.

"We don't plan on running him next year," Bowers said. "I don't want to see him running in claiming races. By the end of this year, he will have done everything we had hoped for and more. I appreciate it when people recognize him and his accomplishments."

Larry Fleming passes away at 87

The Thoroughbred Breeders Association of New Jersey mourns the passing of Larry Fleming, who served as treasurer with dedication and integrity. Larry, 87, was a cornerstone of New Jersey's Thoroughbred breeding community for over half a century. Alongside his late wife, Mildred, he played a vital role in shaping the state's equine industry through their shared passion for breeding quality horses. His commitment, wisdom, and warmth will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

Riding Pretty rallies to win Jersey Girl Handicap

The third time was indeed the charm for Riding Pretty in the Jersey Girl Handicap.

After finishing second and third, respectively, the past two years in the race, Riding Pretty showed her class in a field reduced to four runners following four scratches by cruising to a 3-length win in the 17th edition of the race at Monmouth Park July 5.

Ridden by Samuel Marin, Riding Pretty took advantage of a spacious opening along the rail coming out of the final turn and simply coasted by her three rivals.

"In terms of the speed the four scratches changed the race a lot," said winning trainer Eddie Owens Jr. "I was worried that someone would get loose on the lead, which (Precious Avary) did, and I thought she would just walk around the track.

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

"But they put some pressure on her at the half-mile pole and that really helped us a lot. That's when Samuel Marin was able to drop her inside. That made the race for us when they put that pressure on (Precious Avary) at the half-mile pole. But I still thought she would just walk around the track on the lead."

From that slight challenge, Precious Avary quickly wilted and finished last.

Riding Pretty, owned and bred by Holly Crest Farm, was gathering momentum entering the final turn when an opening appeared inside. Marin shot right through it on the way to victory.

"Things definitely changed with the four scratches because we thought we were going to be just 2 or 3 lengths behind (Precious Avary) but I wound up having to take it back a little bit," said Marin. "I know it seemed like we were too far back but I had a lot of power, and she just took off."

The victory was the third in Jersey-bred stakes company for Riding Pretty, who won for the sixth time in 26 career starts. The daughter of Jack Milton paid $4.40 to win as the race favorite.

Summer's Comin took the place spot, 1½ lengths ahead of Bel Pensiero.

"Riding Pretty was back in last (for almost 6 furlongs) but you can't change her running style now," said Owens. "That's the way she runs. Samuel did a great job. He didn't get her stuck outside. She was able to show she was the best horse. They left her enough room coming out of the final turn for her to just walk through an opening along the rail. That's when she really took off."

Forever Chocolate scores upset in Friendly Lover Handicap

After two straight failed attempts in New Jersey-bred stakes company, Forever Chocolate finally found his sweet spot among state-breds.

The 6-year-old gelding, who entered the Friendly Lover Handicap at Monmouth Park June 8 with just two wins from 20 career starts, stalked early pace-setter Optic Way and then took control at the quarter-pole on the way to a 1¼-length victory.

Trained by Rory Huston and ridden by Paco Lopez, Forever Chocolate was subtly moved off the rail midway through the backstretch as Lopez tipped out his charge to take aim at Optic Way. Forever Chocolate then had to fend off longshot Last Romance on the inside and Great Navigator on the outside in deep stretch. Last Romance took the place spot by a neck.

"He's getting better as he gets older, that's the big thing with him," said Huston. "It's hard to get the Jersey-bred races for 'two other than' to go so we tried him in a Jersey-bred stakes race (the Charles Hesse III) for his last start last year. A mile and a sixteenth, which that race was, is a little too far for him (he finished last in an eight-horse field). A mile is his best distance. This turned out to be a good spot."

Bred and owned by Janet Laszlo, Forever Chocolate returned $18.40 in the field of eight 3-year-olds and up.

Amatteroftime, who won the Friendly Lover Handicap a year ago at odds of 25-1, got off to an awkward start and was never involved.

When Forever Chocolate made his season debut in the John J. Reilly Handicap in May, finishing fourth and beaten 6 lengths, Lopez told Huston he was encouraged by the performance.

"Paco Lopez said not to get disappointed, that the race would set him up for this race," said Huston. "He was actually happy with that race. We saw this in him."

Lopez, the perennial Monmouth Park riding champion, had Forever Chocolate in just the right stalking position.

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

"He ran very good," said Lopez. "You know, I rode him in his final race last year and then in his first start this year. Rory told me to put him in the race early, because he's a much better horse going two turns. He finished very well today going the mile."

All of Forever Chocolate's 21 career starts have come at Monmouth Park. The son of Boys At Tosconova now has three career wins.

Old Friends' multiple stakes winner Joey P euthanized

Unedited Press Release from Old Friends, June 9, 2025

Old Friends, the Thoroughbred retirement facility in Georgetown, Ky., is saddened to report that Joey P has succumbed to complications from a respiratory illness. He was 23.

"Joey P was a wonderful example of the star-power of 'regional' racehorses," said John Nicholson, President and CEO of Old Friends. "Joey P built his racing resume as the hero of New Jersey's Monmouth Park. His specialty at the track was running fast and he excelled at it, earning a following of devoted fans who adored him. Joey P's specialty at Old Friends was making friends who all fell in love with him. He is going to be missed, especially by his paddock-mate, Tuneintobow. We are so grateful to Lori Lane of Second Call Thoroughbred Adoption and Placement for giving us the honor of caring for Joey P in his retirement."

Bred and owned by John Petrini, Joey P, who was by Close Up—Luckey Lipco, by Luckey Jin Beau, was foaled on March 22, 2002, in New Jersey.

Originally trained by Frank Costa for Petrini, Joey P began his racing career as a 2-year-old with a five-race win streak over a two-year period. In 2004, he had two starts at Monmouth Park and won a maiden special weight race and an allowance race.

In 2005, he started his 3-year-old campaign at Meadowlands and continued his win streak with victories in two allowance races and the Jersey Shore Breeders' Cup Stakes (G3) for his first graded-stakes win. That year, he also won the Friendly Lover Handicap (Black Type) and the Rutgers Stakes (Black Type).

Other major wins during his eight-year racing career included the John J. Reilly Handicap (Black Type) for new trainer Benjamin Perkins, Jr., who would train him for the rest of his career, and the Longfellow Stakes (Black Type) in 2006; the Decathlon Stakes (Black Type), the Colts Neck Handicap (Black Type), his second consecutive Friendly Lover Handicap (Black Type), and the Elio Stakes (Listed) in 2007; and his second John J. Reilly Handicap (Black Type), and the Charles Town Dash Invitational Handicap (Listed) in 2008.

Then, in 2009, he won his third John J. Reilly Handicap (Black Type). Following that race, he underwent emergency surgery for a twisted intestine and returned later that year for two races, with no top 3 finishes.

He returned to the track and raced again in 2010 and 2011 and won a couple allowance optional claiming races, and had a couple-second place finishes, but didn't return to his winning form after his 2009 surgery.

Following a fifth in the Colts Neck Handicap (black type) on Aug. 21, 2011, as a 9-year old, he was retired. He finished his career with 18 wins, 10 seconds, one third, and $1,081,167 in earnings in 48 starts.

In 2018, he was sent to Old Friends courtesy of Second Call Thoroughbred Adoption and Placement, who supported him monthly throughout his entire retirement at Old Friends. He arrived at the farm on May 20.

Mia's Crusade earns sixth stakes win in $85,000 Smart N Classy Handicap

Mia's Crusade delivered another impressive performance June 1, winning the $85,000 Smart N Classy Handicap, marking her sixth stakes victory, which ties her with Joey P. in restricted stakes wins. The consistent filly now has career earnings of $532,481.

Breaking sharply from the gate, Mia's Crusade initially set the pace before jockey Paco Lopez eased her back, allowing Summer's Comin – winner of the Spruce Fir Handicap – and My Two Sophia's to take the early lead. Lopez then guided Mia's Crusade on a three-wide move around the far turn, and she responded with a powerful run to claim a narrow lead at the top of the stretch. From that point, she pulled away comfortably under confident handling.

Owner Joseph Ioia praised the filly and the team behind her, stating, "Mia is totally honest, and we have a great team in the barn who deserve credit for the win."

"Chuck Spina is the most experienced, honest, and straightforward trainer. Everyone participates, and everyone gets a fair shake. We are thrilled with the victory."

Mia's Crusade continues to demonstrate her exceptional ability and consistency, adding yet another milestone to her impressive record.

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North Carolina

THOROUGHBRED ASSOCIATION

September 2025

President's message

Happy vacation to all. I hope everyone has a safe time during the coming months.

Please remember to submit your membership applications to continue to receive the *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred* magazine.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 336-622-3089 or email bherring@rtelco.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

Bonnie Herring
NCTA President

Mopotism dam of Journalism

It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of Mopotism due to complications of colic on July 15. Without longtime NCTA member Frank Batten, there would be no Journalism, who most recently won the Preakness-G1 and the Haskell-G1. He ran in all three of the Triple Crown races, finishing no further back than second place.

Frank bred his dam, Grade 2 winner Mopotism, out of his broodmare Peppy Rafaela, by Bernardini. Mopotism raced for Reddam Racing and, upon retiring in 2019, was sold to Don Alberto for $1,050,000 as a broodmare. Journalism is her first foal.

Mopotism made 26 starts, with 22 of them in graded stakes races and 14 of those being Grade 1. She won the La Canada-G2 and Island Fashion Stakes while placing in 10 other graded races. I was fortunate to watch her run in the 2019 Breeders' Cup at Churchill Downs. I planted myself firmly against the paddock fence, snapping photos of her every move. Reporting on her entries and results was one of the highlights of my job as president.

Mopotism has a yearling filly by Into Mischief and a filly foal by Flightline. Frank Batten owns and is racing her full sister, Ruth.

May the racing gods smile on them all.

Rebecca Montaldo

Hitting the Board

June 5 – July 1, 2025

Date	Horse	Track	NCTA Connection	Results
6/4/25	Rockaway Reef	Horseshoe Indianapolis	Bred by Denise Walsh (Timber Bay Farm)	3rd
6/7/25	Tinki Abarrio	Churchill Downs	Bred by Nancy Shuford	**WINNER**
6/10/25	Taproom	Fort Erie	William Thompson Jr.	3rd
6/10/25	In Your Life	Louisiana	Bred by Nancy Shuford	**WINNER**
6/14/25	Tiz Sweet Emotion	Belterra Park	Bred by Denise Walsh - Never Better Stables	**WINNER**
6/19/25	Raise A Ruckus	Charles Town	Bred & Owned by Clint Lowery	2nd
6/21/25	Double Tough Tiger	Camarero Race Track	Bred by Beth Muirhead	**WINNER**
6/22/25	Mom's Martini	Gulfstream Park	Owned by Dan Shea - Shea D Boy's Stable	**WINNER**
6/27/25	Cairo Caper	Penn National	Owned by Maple Leaf Farm	2nd
6/29/25	Foxxy Cleopatra	Churchill Downs	Bred by Nancy Shuford	2nd

Race Results

TINKI ABARRIO - WINNER at Churchill Downs, June 7; 6 furlongs on the dirt. Track good. Final Time 1:09.81. Off to a slow start, shee was off the pace four wide into the turn, challenged four deep turning for home, had an advantage in upper stretch and ran clear for the win.

IN YOUR LIFE - WINNER at Louisiana Downs, June 10; 7½ furlongs on the turf. Course good. Final Time 1:33.49. In Your Life pressed the pace from the two path, took the lead at the half mile marker, cleared in the stretch to win.

TIZ SWEET EMOTION - WINNER at Belterra Park, June 14; 1 1/16 miles on the dirt. Track Fast. Final Time 1:46.49. Well handled on the inside, she drew out leaving the turn with urging by the crop to the win.

DOUBLE TOUGH TIGER - WINNER at Camarero Racetrack, June 21; 1 3/16 miles on the dirt. Track Fast. Final Time 1:59.2. Stalked the pace between horses, took the lead, driving to the win.

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North Carolina Thoroughbred Association

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HORSES IN TRAINING - 2025

Please list the horses you have BRED or OWN that are in training or racing. The Association will put them into our stable on Daily Racing Form. We will keep up with them through this medium and have news for the association and for the Mid-Atlantic. We will only use horses that finish in the money.

This will let us know what our members are doing on the racing front and inform everyone about your successes.

I will still have to trust you to keep us informed regarding the breeding. I love receiving news on how the horses are doing, who you are breeding to, and how you did at the sales. It is hard to find the time to sit down and send me this information, BUT PLEASE TRY.

Please take the time to fill this out for your racing stock. Please list all horses, even the ones I already have, so I can keep our stable updated. Use another page if you need more room.

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HORSE'S NAME_____DAM_____DOB____ ☐☐☐
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Mail to: Bonnie Herring
NCTA
436 Sam Lowe Road
Siler City, NC 27344

Or send via E-mail at:
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PENNSYLVANIA HORSE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

PA Thoroughbred NEWSLETTER

September 2025
pabred.com

PA-BRED REMINDERS

- **Early registration:** Within 365 days of foaling
- **Yearling registration:** Dec. 31 of yearling year
- **Stallion registration:** Feb. 15 of year breeding
- **Broodmare domicile:** Dec. 1 or 14 days after a public sale or entering state if being bred back to PA-sire

VISIT PABRED.COM

- **Racing and breeding news**
- **PA-Bred entries/results**
- **Rules, regulations, forms**

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A plethora of firsts for Royal Breeze Thoroughbreds

By Nikki Sherman

You've seen it before in countless books and films: the uplifting journey of a little girl from a non-horsey family living in an urban community who loves horses and dreams of the winner's circle. Well, this fairy tale for Carol Casella is no longer fictional. The Boston native remembered begging her father to take her to the racetrack until getting her driver's license opened up a wide open world of riding horses. She showed Arabians and participated in barrel racing but the racetrack still beckoned.

"I loved the adrenaline rush of riding fast horses but did not know how to get started," Casella said. "I had no contacts at the track. I followed racing and went to the (Kentucky) Derby for many years; it's a bucket list for many to go only once but I went every year. I had no idea I would end up breeding to some of those horses as stallions today!"

In 2018, she discovered a mare in a Texas kill pen, and that changed everything. There was no doubt in her mind that she would rescue the mare, especially since her appreciation for the great Thoroughbreds of the past was piqued when she researched the mare's pedigree. The bay named Ravin in the Heat was a granddaughter of Alleged, a great-granddaughter of Lyphard and a great-great granddaughter of Bold Reasoning.

"Alleged went down in history in Europe (when winning) the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe twice," Casella noted. "(Ravin in the Heat) is sweet as anything, talented and a great ride."

Her discovery of Ravin in the Heat solidified the importance of not only racehorse aftercare but also sharing the facts of its many myths. She actively rehomes her own horses when they are ready for a new career and makes sure to track them.

While she is grateful to have found the Alleged descendant, she explained, "Her original owners that I tracked down loved these horses and had a buy-back guarantee, so they would have taken them back. We need to get the word out to people selling about checking references, information and how people are posing as homes and taking them right to the kill pen."

After her purchase of Ravin in the Heat, Casella traveled to Texas so she could watch one of the mare's foals race at Sam Houston in person, just as he was getting started on a racing career that would see him earn six figures. While on the backstretch she fell in love with a gorgeous, silvery-gray mare in their barn named Rockin Royalty who was at the tail end of her career. Shortly thereafter, the mare became Casella's first broodmare. She also gave inspiration for a stable name, Royal Breeze Thoroughbreds.

"I wanted to give homage to a Thoroughbred breezing and Rockin Royalty is a nicely built, old style horse with old bloodlines," Casella noted. "So in that way, Rockin Royalty helped me decide on a stable name."

Rockin Royalty's first foal was bred

in Texas and when the sire of that filly, Airoforce, moved to Pennsylvania, Casella was introduced to the benefits for Pennsylvania-Breds. The mare has been in the Keystone State ever since. Her 3-year-old son, Rockinhot Amadeaus (by Latent Heat), is currently in training at Parx Racing.

Though she lives in Massachusetts, Casella drives down for every race and has nothing but praise for her time in Pennsylvania. "It has the best breeders awards, a great offering of Kentucky-quality stallions, many stakes and races for all levels, and so much more! We have foaled, run and done business in four other states and love it here. The people are enjoyable and everyone is supportive of each other. I've made many friends here who I value."

In slowly building her broodmare band, Casella focuses on quality commercial and solid regional mares and is proud to own black-type daughters of Tapit, as well as others by Unbridled's Song, Nyquist, War Front and Oxbow.

One of those mares is a daughter of Tale of the Cat named Miss Antonella. Casella chose to focus on the PA-Sired/PA-Bred races when utilizing Pennsylvania stallion Tight Ten, a son of Tapit from the female family of multiple Grade 1 winner Fleet Renee. Tight Ten stands for $2,500 at Rich Miller's Mountain Springs Stables in Palmyra. The resulting foal was a flashy chestnut filly with a feisty streak, earning her the moniker "Baby Shark".

On May 28 of this year, that filly left her mark after just three career starts. Officially named Miss Casella, she went right to the lead from the start, begrudgingly gave way, and then found another gear while professionally surging back to win by a length and a half. It was a plethora of firsts, including the first winner for Tight Ten.

"To breed a foal and win is amazing," Carol Casella raved. "Not only was she the first Pennsylvania-Bred of ours to make it to a race, she was the first to win. There is no feeling like seeing them at your own farm, caring for them every day since birth, and exceeding our expectations all the way to the winner's circle! I have purchased young horses before and had a claiming horse, but there's no feeling like this.

"Miss Casella is the first foal out of Miss Antonella and the first foal by Tight Ten to win. He's a well-bred Tapit who competed in the Breeders' Cup and I know Rich has high hopes for him. I'm excited that Miss Casella is contributing to his success and career at stud."

The future is bright for Casella and her Royal Breeze Thoroughbreds. She has several partners from her home state joining her, thanks to the enticing Pennsylvania incentives. Her PA-Breds are sired by a "who's who" of stallions nationally and locally, including Catholic Boy, Jimmy Creed, Smarty Jones, Gift Box, Frosted, Mystic Guide and Keen Ice.

She is most excited about several by Preakness Stakes winner Cloud Computing, who moved to Dr. Bill Solomon's Pin Oak Lane Farm at the start of the 2024 season and stands for $3,500. Casella credits Dr. Solomon for being a valued mentor in

continued on page 4

A few words from the Executive Secretary

Fasig Tipton Saratoga was home to a Smarty Party as he was inducted into the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame. Even though there were seven inductees, half the pavilion was filled with Smarty supporters. Pat Chapman, John Servis and Stu Elliott addressed the crowd and it was a fantastic ceremony. August 1st was a great day for Pennsylvania as Smarty was the fourth PA-Bred to enter the Hall of Fame.

Our first PA-Bred Yearling Show took place on June 21 and we've already been contacted by other breeders who said they would be there next year. This years' Champion was a filly by McKinzie out of Emerald Bracelet, bred and owned by Tom Coulter's Arrowwood Farm. Remember, all participants are eligible for a share of $40,000 at the end of their 2yo and 3yo careers, according to highest earnings. That's $20,000 awarded for each year, and not limited to Pennsylvania earnings. Hope to see your future yearlings.

I'm happy to announce that there will be no registration fee for the PA-Sired PA-Bred Stallion Series in 2025. If your 2yo is a PA-Sired PA-Bred you will be automatically registered to run. The only exception will be the third and final leg of the 2024 Stallion Series which will be run on Sept. 19 on PA Day at the Races, with stakes purses of $100,000 for 3yos and 3yo fillies. These horses were already registered as 2yos in 2024. Any 3yos you wish to enter in these races that were not nominated in 2024 will have to be nominated by paying the $5,000 stated late fee to the PHBA before the nomination date of Tuesday, Sept. 2. A $50,000 breeder bonus for horses that finish first, second and third in total points for the 2024 series will be paid after those races – $25,000 for first, $15,000 for second and $10,000 for third.

If you are still using paper registrations, please make sure you forward a signed copy of the Code of Ethics, which is attached to the registration form. We will be transitioning to paperless this year. Wishing you good luck for the balance of 2025, and remember, PA is the only place to Breed and Race!!

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AVERIE LEVANTI PHOTOS

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the move to Pennsylvania. To honor his legacy, she chose to name their first Cloud Computing colt of the season "Sulayman," which is Arabic for Solomon.

And then there's one filly in particular who is forever recorded by Miss Casella's winner's circle photo. "A huge Cloud Computing filly we had in February is the size of a yearling," recounted Casella. "She has temper tantrums at times and strikes out. Well, the week Miss Casella won, she struck out and hit me in the eye, so I have a black eye in the winner's circle. We named her Punch N Judy. It's just the life of a breeder!"

PA-Bred Fund Statistics: Top Earners

January 1 through May 31, 2025

LEADING EARNERS - TOTAL AWARDS

Breeder Name	Breeder	Stallion	Total	Breeder Name	Breeder	Stallion	Total
Warriors Reward	220,245	58,391	278,636	St. Omer's Farm	58,952	0	58,952
Uptowncharlybrown Stud LLC	181,266	89,737	271,003	Sylmar Farm Inc.	57,820	0	57,820
Northview Stallion Station Inc.	0	119,285	119,285	Cavanaugh Breen Farm LLC	53,155	0	53,155
Wyn Oaks Farm LLC	48,489	60,932	109,421	Kathleen Brady	53,051	0	53,051
Blackstone Farm LLC	98,370	0	98,370	Chuck Russo	41,958	10,489	52,447
A1A Racing	67,684	26,082	93,766	Pewter Stable	36,613	14,923	51,536
Glenn E Brok LLC	62,331	23,823	86,155	Arrowwood Farm Inc.	50,157	0	50,157
Richard N. Miller	69,972	14,471	84,443	Social Inclusion Partners LLC	0	46,258	46,258
Equivine Farm LLC	75,243	0	75,243	Town & Country Farms Management LLC	45,683	0	45,683
Peter Giangiulio	68,081	0	68,081	Joseph Imbesi	45,242	0	45,242

LEADING STALLIONS

Fund Money includes Stallion Awards only

Stallion Name	No. of Races	Award Total	Stallion Name	No. of Races	Award Total
Uptowncharlybrown	181	89,737	Eastwood	28	14,221
Warrior's Reward	154	58,391	Red Vine	27	12,522
Weigelia	106	57,978	Medallist	17	12,508
Hoppertunity	143	53,475	Emperor Tiberius	22	12,343
Social Inclusion	51	46,258	Il Villano	28	10,489
Uncle Lino	61	29,780	Golddigger's Boy	27	10,425
Peace and Justice	66	26,082	Pat On the Back	16	9,337
Jump Start	53	19,878	Well Spelled	40	9,187
Rowayton	27	19,858	Boisterous	31	8,103
Winchill	70	14,923	Talent Search	19	7,181

LEADING HORSES

Fund Money includes: PA-Bred Races, Breeder and Stallion Awards and PA-Bred Owner-Bonus Payments.

Horse	Pedigree	Breeder	Races	Breeder Award	Stallion Award	Owner Bonus	Total
BIG BOYS ANSWER*	Uptowncharlybrown-Empires Answer	Cavanaugh Breen Farm LLC	5	53,155	13,289	30,768	97,212
HARP'S HOT CORNER*	Weigelia-Katarica Disco	St. Omer's Farm	5	56,040	14,010	24,480	94,530
SON OF THOR*	Rowayton-Charlybrown's Rose	Uptowncharlybrown Stud LLC	4	42,336	10,584	30,240	83,160
PACHELBEL*	Hoppertunity-Brilliant Sunshine	Newell Thoroughbreds Ltd	7	39,883	9,971	28,488	78,342
SOCIALLY AWKWARD*	Social Inclusion-Bluegrass Smile	Blackstone Farm LLC	6	41,748	10,437	16,080	68,265
ET'S MOON MAIDEN*	Emperor Tiberius-Andrea's Moon	Richard N Miller	7	29,803	7,451	21,288	58,542
JUMP A FOX*	Jump Start-Foxy A. G.	Peter Giangiulio	8	29,439	7,360	21,028	57,827
HI HEELED WARRIOR*	Warrior's Reward-Four Inch Heels	Warriors Reward	8	26,880	6,720	19,200	52,800
OKIE DEN DEN*	Uptowncharlybrown-Baetykaty	Equivine Farm LLC	7	28,976	7,244	13,840	50,060
BEAUTIFULCRAZYGIRL*	Social Inclusion-Socially Driven	Richard A Malouf	3	30,000	7,500	12,000	49,500
WINDSOR GOLD	Golden Lad-English Mum	Shooting Star Stable	4	20,174	0	28,820	48,994
NINJA PRIZE*	Warrior's Reward-Lemon Strudel	Kathleen Brady	5	24,080	6,020	17,200	47,300
TARA'S TALENT*	Talent Search-Graemy	Glenn E Brok LLC	3	22,131	5,533	15,808	43,472
FAR MO POWER*	Uncle Lino-J. D. Safari	Peter Giangiulio	3	21,868	5,467	15,620	42,955
IMPERIO AZTECA*	Weigelia-Petrezza	Jaime Guerrero	4	20,496	5,124	14,640	40,260
LADY ANNABELLE*	Golddigger's Boy-Cartier Lady	Luana J Johnson	7	20,031	5,008	14,308	39,347
IN SPADES*	Peace and Justice-Lady Kierkegaard	A1A Racing	5	20,003	5,001	14,288	39,292
RENARD*	Social Inclusion-Abets Abet	Joseph Imbesi	2	19,880	4,970	14,200	39,050
COMMINGLING*	Social Inclusion-Rhyme N Rhythm	Wyn Oaks Farm LLC	7	19,488	4,872	13,920	38,280
HOUGHTON SHUFFLE*	Medallist-Runs Like L	Melissa Houghton	3	20,560	5,140	11,600	37,300

**Denotes PA-sired*

SCTOBA

South Carolina

Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2025

Racing Across the Nation

South Carolina training centers saw seven graduates find themselves in the winner's circle following stakes races between May 31 and July 20. Book'em Danno won twice!!

On May 31 at Monmouth Park, **Barbadian Runner** proved best in a three-horse field in the Jersey Derby. He stalked the other two for the first half-mile staying within 3½ lengths of the lead. During the turn for home, he took control and drew clear in the stretch, proving to be much the best winning by 7¼ lengths. Barbadian Runner is owned by AJ Will Win Stables LLC, trained by Henry Walters and was ridden by Samuel Marin in the Jersey Derby. He was prepared for his racing career by Bobby and Jason McCutchen at their training center in Kingstree.

Book'em Danno recorded his seventh stakes victory in the True North Stakes-G3 at Saratoga June 7. A graduate of Randy and Kala Rentz's breaking program in Erhardt, the 4-year-old settled into fourth early. Coming four wide into the stretch, Book'em Danno dug in and made the lead only 70 yards before the finish line crossing the wire 1¼ lengths clear of the field. He is owned by Atlantic Six Racing, trained by Derek Ryan and was ridden by Paco Lopez in the True North.

Book'em Danno came back again July 19 and won the Alfred G. Vanderbilt Stakes-G2 at Saratoga. After a rough beginning, he settled into fourth position and came five wide into the stretch before mowing down the leaders and proving 2¼ lengths the best. In 14 career starts, this horse has earned an average of $105,362 per race!!

Mo Plex, a graduate of the Travis Durr Training Center, captured his second stakes win in a row June 21, proving best in the Ohio Derby-G3 at Thistledown. Mo Plex sat right behind the leader, took the lead just past the quarter pole and, under steady urging, won by 2 lengths. Owned by R and H Stable, Mo Plex is trained by Jeremiah Englehart and was ridden in the Ohio Derby by Joseph Ramos. In eight career starts, Mo Plex has recorded four stakes victories, a second and two thirds. He has run in only stakes since breaking his maiden in June 2024. Mo Plex has earned $745,000.

On June 28, **Post Time**, owned by Ellen Charles' Hillwood Stable LLC, captured his seventh stakes victory in 18 career starts by winning the Deputed Testamony Stakes at Laurel Park. Having one beat early, Post Time came up between rivals in the stretch and took off to cross the finish line 3½ lengths in front. He is trained by Brittany Russell and was ridden by her husband Sheldon. Post Time came up through Cary Frommer's breaking program in Aiken.

Riding Pretty became a stakes winner for the third time July 5, proving best in the Jersey Girl at Monmouth Park. Owned by Holly Crest Farm, Riding Pretty trailed the field for the first half mile before launching her bid and proving best when powering home to a 3¼-length victory. Trained by Eddie Owens, she was ridden by Samuel Marin. Riding Pretty is a graduate of the Travis Durr Training Center.

The 2-year-old filly **Border Czar** captured the My Dear Girl Stakes at Woodbine in only her second career start July 12 after having broken her maiden at Woodbine June 7. Also a product of Travis Durr's breaking program, Border Czar is owned and trained by Barbara Minshall. She was ridden by Rafael Hernandez. While stalking the leaders, Border Czar came five wide into the stretch before taking control at the eighth pole and quickly drawing clear, crossing the finish line 2¾ lengths in front.

Yawen Wu's **Sedbury's Ghost,** also trained by Barbara Minshall, became a stakes winner for the first time by crossing the finish line 1¼ lengths in front of the field in the Plate Trial Stakes at Woodbine July 20. Ridden by Ryan Munger, Sedbury's Ghost raced in sixth position for three-quarters of a mile. He quickly advanced through traffic, taking the lead inside the eighth pole, and winning by 1¼ lengths. Sedbury's Ghost was also developed for his racing career by Travis Durr.

Congratulations Donna Freyer

For the fifth year in a row, SCTOBA member Donna Freyer earned the Best of Camden Award for Professional Services. When notified, Donna was told this achievement is a testament to her dedication, hard work and commitment to excellence in the horse training and breeding industry.

Once a pony clubber, Donna has spent her life around horses. She has trained over the years for Camden Training Center owner and SCTOBA member Stuart Grant among others. Donna started the S.C. Residency Stakes program for 2-year-olds who spent at least 90 days preparing for their racing careers at our farms and training centers. The filly division was named the Donna Freyer Stakes.

Donna and Kip Elser started the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation of South Carolina. Freyer and Elser also launched a campaign to build a farm at the Wateree Correctional Facility in South Carolina. Coined Second Chances, this was an alliance between retired racehorses and gave prisoners an opportunity to learn new skills. Similar programs can be found in other states.

Donna has served several years as vice president of the South Carolina Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association.

Debut Winners

There was a flurry of South Carolina prepared debut maiden special weight winners between May 21 and July 12. On May 21, Rockinmoney, who was prepared for racing by Randy and Kala Rentz, broke his maiden at Finger Lakes by three-quarters of a length.

The Travis Durr Training Center recently saw five graduates win their debuts. On May 24, Armored Guard came from fourth to win by 1½ lengths at Woodbine. On the next day, Flaunt quickly took the lead and won by 1½ lengths. On June 7, Border Czar broke last of seven before working her way through the field to reach the finish line first by a neck. Flaunt and Border Czar both also won at Woodbine. On June 8, Sir Newtons Laws gave a very game performance at Monmouth Park, winning by a nose. In a duplicate finish, Toga Twist got up in the final stride at Saratoga to get to the finish line first, by a nose, July 6.

On July 12, Cary Frommer's former student, Rule Sixty Two, was a debut winner at Colonial Downs, getting to the wire first by a neck.

South Carolina-trained winners

Horse	*Training Center*	*Date*	*Track*	*Type of Race*
BARBADIAN RUNNER	McCutchen Training Center	05/31/25	Monmouth Park	Jersey Derby
BOOK'EM DANNO	Rentz Farm Training Center	06/07/25	Saratoga	True North S-G3
MO PLEX	Travis Durr Training Center	06/21/25	Thistledown	Ohio Derby-G3
Run Jalen Run	Mason Springs	06/21/25	Fairmount Park	Allowance
Shine On Moon	Travis Durr Training Center	06/22/25	Laurel Park	Allowance
Hay Hay Harry	Travis Durr Training Center	06/25/25	Finger Lakes	Allowance
Preach It Warrior	Rentz Farm Training Center	06/26/25	Penn National	Allowance
Alpine Giant	Travis Durr Training Center	06/26/25	Aqueduct	Maiden Special Weight
Low Country Magic	Mason Springs	06/27/25	Laurel Park	Allowance
Organized Chaos	Rentz Farm Training Center	06/27/25	Penn National	Allowance
Bartlett	Rentz Farm Training Center	06/27/25	Penn National	Allowance
Mywifeknowsitall	Travis Durr Training Center	06/27/26	Gulfstream	Allowance
POST TIME	Aiken - Cary Frommer	06/28/25	Laurel Park	Deputed Testamony S
Conceptualize	Travis Durr Training Center	06/28/25	Laurel Park	Allowance
Citori	Travis Durr Training Center	06/28/25	Woodbine	Maiden Special Weight
Tempting Seis	Travis Durr Training Center	06/28/25	Fair Meadows	Maiden Special Weight
Boardwalk Jack	Travis Durr Training Center	06/28/25	Monmouth Park	Maiden Special Weight
Smugglers Gold	Travis Durr Training Center	06/29/25	Monmouth Park	Allowance
Banker Blayney	Arch Kingsley	07/02/25	Finger Lakes	Allowance
Can Do	Aiken-Rebecca Hurt	07/02/25	Delaware Park	Starter Allowance
Pachelbel	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/02/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
D's A Rock	Travis Durr Training Center	07/02/25	Finger Lakes	Allowance
Southscape	Travis DurrTraining Center	07/03/25	Evangeline Downs	Maiden Special Weight
I Can Run	Mason Springs	07/05/25	Monmouth Park	Allowance
RIDING PRETTY	Travis Durr Training Center	07/05/25	Monmouth Park	Jersey Girl S
Toga Twist	Travis Durr Training Center	07/06/25	Saratoga	Maiden Special Weight
Downtown Channel	Travis Durr Training Center	07/06/25	Saratoga	Allowance
Amatteroftime	Travis Durr Training Center	07/06/25	Monmouth Park	Allowance
Lipan Law	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/07/25	Finger Lakes	Maiden Special Weight
Angel of Hope	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/08/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
Montauk Surf	Travis Durr Training Center	07/08/25	Finger Lakes	Maiden Special Weight
Kohler's	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/09/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
Foligno	Travis Durr Training Center	07/10/25	Horseshoe Indianapolis	Maiden Special Weight
Our Miss Crossbow	Aiken - Rebecca Hurt	07/10/25	Charles Town	Allowance
Air Recruit	Aiken - Legacy Stable	07/10/25	Colonial Downs	Allowance
Cappetta	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/10/25	Penn National	Starter Allowance
Konteekee	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/10/25	Thistledown	Allowance
Silver Raleigh	Travis Durr Training Center	07/10/25	Woodbine	Maiden Special Weight
Mila Junes	Travis Durr Training Center	07/11/25	Belterra Park	Allowance
Lucky Luke	Travis Durr Training Center	07/11/25	Fair Meadows	Allowance
Rule Sixty Two	Aiken - Cary Frommer	07/12/25	Fair Meadows	Allowance
Little JP	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/12/25	Grand Prairie	Starter Allowance
BORDER CZAR	Travis Durr Training Center	07/12/25	Woodbine	My Dear Girl S
Paris Surprise	Mason Springs	07/13/25	Ellis Park	Maiden Special Weight
Far Mo Power	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/15/25	Parx Racing	Allowance
Scaramanga	Arch Kingsley	07/16/25	Finger Lakes	Allowance
Storm Wind	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/16/25	Presque Isle Downs	Maiden Special Weight
Painting Stones	Travis Durr Training Center	07/16/25	Finger Lakes	Maiden Special Weight
Biagio	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/17/25	Penn National	Starter Allowance
Tactical Humor	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/18/25	Penn National	Allowance
Olivia's Grace	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/18/25	Saratoga	Maiden Special Weight
Run Jalen Run	Mason Springs	07/19/25	Fairmount Park	Allowance
BOOK'EM DANNO	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/19/25	Saratoga	Alfred G. Vanderbilt S-G2
Pure Breeze	Travis Durr Training Center	07/19/25	Evangeline Downs	Maiden Special Weight
Boardwalk Jack	Travis Durr Training Center	07/19/25	Monmouth Park	Allowance
Mo Trump	Rentz Farm Training Center	07/20/25	Saratoga	Allowance
SEDBURY'S GHOST	Travis Durr Training Center	07/20/25	Woodbine	Plate Trial S
Regalton	Travis Durr Training Center	07/20/25	Saratoga	Maiden Special Weight
Botta Swing	Travis Durr Training Center	07/20/25	Woodbine	Allowance

VIRGINIA

COLONIAL DOWNS SUMMER SEASON CONTINUES; 4-PACK OF VIRGINIA-BRED/SIRED STAKES HIGHLIGHTS EARLY MEET ACTION

Colonial Downs opened its longest thoroughbred racing season in years July 9 and will continue a 41-day campaign in New Kent (over a ten week period) through September 13. A minimum of two stakes are being contested every Saturday and the annual "Festival of Racing" program — which included the G1 Arlington Million, G2 Beverly D and G2 Secretariat Stakes — is already in the books.

Next major event is the $500,000 Old Dominion Derby slated for September 6. The stakes, one of six to be contested that day, retains its Grade 3 status as a 1-1/8 miles turf test though it incurred a name change, away from the Virginia Derby. After 21 editions — the first of which came in 1998 — the Derby itself became a dirt stakes this past spring and is now an official Kentucky Derby prep.

Early season action in New Kent featured a four-pack of stakes for Virginia-bred/sired horses — males on Friday July 18 followed by fillies/mares the next afternoon. Odds-on favorites Repo Rocks and Showstopper Copper reigned supreme in the $125,000 Edward P. Evans and $125,000 Punch Line Stakes, respectively. With the entirety of the card taken off the turf due to a late afternoon downpour, both the added money events were run on dirt.

Double B Racing Stables' millionaire and multiple graded stakes winner Repo Rocks proved much the best in the 1-1/16 miles Evans, beating five other foes by 6½ lengths. After establishing himself in second and to the outside of Buddy Buddy through the first call, the Jamie Ness trainee with Mychel Sanchez in the irons took command soon after the quarter pole and pulled away by multiple lengths in the stretch, covering the distance in 1:42.11 over a muddy track. Bred in Virginia by Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin III, the 7-year-old gelding by Tapiture now boasts a career record of 52-11-11-8 with career earnings of $1,120,466.

"I thought we were the best horse turf or dirt," Ness said. "He's a blue-collar horse. Claimed for $40,000 a few years ago. That's a claim of a lifetime. He's still at the top of his game and still

Virginia-bred millionaire Repo Rocks won the the Edward P. Evans Stakes (Coady Media).

earning. He's a very good Virginia-bred and we'll try to run him sparingly so he's ready to come back to Colonial next year."

After stealing to the front early in the 5½-furlong Punch Line Stakes, William Dove's Showstopper Copper could not be caught, earning his first added-money score. Trained by Thomas Lingenfelter and piloted by Ben Curtis, Showstopper Copper stopped the clock in 1:03.69 and beat his four rivals by five lengths. Bred in Virginia by Carlos Moore & Gillian Gordon-Moore, the 4-year-old son of Air Force Blue now has a career record of 9-5-0-1 with $165,800 in the bank.

"I told Ben, 'You've won more races than I've saddled,'" Lingenfelter said. "He'll break sharp, just get him out of the gates clean, after that you do what you've got to do. I think (Showstopper Copper) can run on the grass, but I don't think he's as good on the grass as he is on the dirt."

The next day's Virginia-bred/sired fillies and mares stakes action saw Thursday Girl and Noquestionaboutit upend the odds-on favorites to win the $125,000 Brookmeade and $125,000 Glenn Petty, respectively.

Two upstarts trained by Brittany Russell ran one-two in the Brookmeade, led by Timbercreek Racing's Thursday Girl. Piloted by Sheldon Russell, Thursday Girl covered the 1-1/16 miles in 1:43.46 over a "good" turf course, beating her stablemate Sun Cross home by 1½ lengths. After breaking sharply, Thursday Girl was taken back by Russell to sit a pocket rail trip then made her move mid-stretch. Sent off at 12-1, the winner paid $26.20 to win. Bred in Virginia by Knockgriffin Farm, the 4-year-old daughter of Speightster notched her first stakes score for a career record of 11-3-1-1 with earnings of $160,110.

"Look, I have to give credit to both of my owners for running these fillies in here today, it was kind of both of their ideas," Brittany Russell said. "Sarah Miller owns Thursday Girl and she mentioned this spot way back when. It

was huge. Sun Cross was lightly raced and just had one kind of okay start this year but she has been training well. Expectations weren't super high. We were just hoping both the girls would run good."

The Estate of R Larry Johnson's homebred Noquestionaboutit proved best down the stretch over Mystic Seaport in the Glenn Petty to make her first stakes try a winning one. Trained by Mike Trombetta and with Jorge Ruiz in the irons, Noquestionaboutit beat the odds-on favorite by 1½ lengths, completing the 5½ furlongs in 1:02.87 over a "firm" turf course. Bred in Virginia by Johnson, the 4-year-old daughter of Great Notion has a career record of 6-2-1-0 with $119,600 in earnings.

Showstopper Copper was best in the 2025 Punch Line Stakes (Coady Media).

VIRGINIA & MARYLAND-BRED/ SIRED HORSES COMPETE TOGETHER IN STAKES THIS SUMMER

In the first round of summer stakes open to both Virginia-bred/sired and Maryland-bred/sired horses, Dream Big Racing's Winfinity captured the $125,000 Miss Disco Stakes for 3-year-old fillies. She finished the seven-furlong dirt stakes in 1:21.22. The daughter of Not This Time had done well at Colonial previously. She won the Keswick Stakes for Virginia-Restricted horses last August then finished second by a half-length in an allowance earlier this year at the three-day Virginia Derby meet in March. Last year's riding champ Ben Curtis was aboard for trainer John Ortiz.

"Winfinity loves this track," said owner John Wade of Dream Big Racing. "She won her first stakes last year then got injured at another track and came back here and did great. We were excited to see her today. She did what she always does. She stays in there, then she closes and makes it exciting and makes my heart pound a little extra more."

Eric Rizer's consistent Maryland-bred Slam Notion prevailed in the $125,000 Star de Naskra Stakes for trainer Rob Bailes under drizzly conditions. The 3-year-old Great Notion gelding won for the fourth time in eight starts, all but one on dirt. The stakes was at seven furlongs on the dirt. J.G. Torrealba was in the irons and rode for the seventh straight time.

"We knew we had a tough horse coming into the race," said Rizer, who bred the horse with his wife Nancy. "He was really, really sharp and very relaxed. J.G. gave us a beautiful ride. He knew Sheldon (Russell) was going to slow things down on the front with Saxton which left us a lot of horse at the end. Slam Motion doesn't waste anything in the paddock or in the barn and just saves it for the right moment. He has such a kind, easy manner."

VIRGINIA-RESTRICTED JUVENILES ARE SHOWCASED IN KESWICK, HICKORY TREE STAKES

Virginia-bred, -sired and certified juveniles took to the dirt in two stakes August 2 and Just Philtored proved best in a thrilling finish against the fillies in the $100,000 Keswick, while Trendsetter went from last of six males to first in the $100,000 Hickory Tree.

With both the Keswick and the Hickory Tree going 5½ furlongs, Red White and Blue Racing and London Reid Thoroughbreds' Just Philtored won the day, completing the distance in 1:03.82, a full second faster than Midway Racing's Trendsetter's final time of 1:04.88.

Trained by Mike Trombetta and with Mychel Sanchez in the irons, Just Philtored tended to the pace set by Smooch Up, took over the lead mid-stretch, and held off a game late effort from Slewperstitus to win by a neck. The Virginia-certified, Maryland-bred daughter of Great Notion remains perfect from two starts and added $60,000 for a bankroll of $92,430.

Trained by Ben Colebrook, Trendsetter trailed the field on the rail in the Hickory Tree before swinging wide to begin a rally under the hands of jockey Ben Curtis. Though the Kentucky-bred Modernist colt was green down the lane, Curtis was able to straighten Trendsetter out and fend off the bids of two Jerry Robb trainees. Perfect from two starts, the Virginia-certified 2-year-old earned $60,000 for his first stakes score for a total of $112,500.

Thursday Girl prevailed in the Brookmeade Stakes (Coady Media).

Noquestionaboutit captured the Glenn Petty Stakes (Coady Media).

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Virginia Breeders Fund

West Virginia
THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
Newsletter September 2025

Saturday night thoughts in West Virginia

By Jeff Gilleas

Be it ever so humble there is no place like home.

Glancing over the entries for Saturday, June 21, the feature race appeared as another contentious rematch between John McKee-bred sons of Fiber Sonde, No Change ($565,000), and Muad'dib ($1,031,000).

The nine-race program was strewn with short-priced morning-line prospects, with Mother Nature finally playing the role as non-factor. During the early portion of the card, racing enthusiasts might have failed to appreciate the narrative of some victorious participants, as the United States military was carrying out a bombing mission against the nuclear capabilities of Iran.

The prospective beginning to WWIII oddly strengthened the intensity of local horseman's accomplishments, if only briefly, in a small corner of `Almost Heaven', West Virginia.

◆

In race 1, trainer David Walters' (1,596 wins and counting) legacy remained steadfast as one of the most incomparable conditioners to ready a first time starter to ace his/her debut. Funding the Kids, a 3-year-old bay filly by the highly popular stallion Uncle Lino, broke a bit wonky, but when straightened leaving the chute left no doubt as to her superior ability.

She shifted through a series of gears down the backside as she repelled a gifted field of eight, stopping the teletimer in a sprightly 52.82 seconds. Funding the Kids is owned and bred by longtime Walters' supporter, Michael Miller.

We haven't seen David's mother-in-law, Ann Hilton, at the races in quite some time. The curator of the Charles Town History Wall and local racing historian was once partner to legendary trainer Robert R. Hilton. Their daughter, Ellen, is David's wife, and besides being his number one asset held important posts in the Publicity and Racing Departments.

David's sibling lineage is well known regionally and dates back half-a-century, with brothers John and Henry continuing to influence the racing tradition of excellence. Henry Walters-trained Barbadian Runner is fresh from a second place effort in the Delaware Derby and win in the Jersey Derby.

◆

Mike Sterling started his training career in the early '90s and has fought the arduous backstretch battles ever since. He is often a one-man show, functioning as groom and hot walker for his modest stable.

Generally venturesome as owner, trainer and breeder, Mike's filly, Over the Bull, stylishly captured the back half of the early daily double. The lustrous daughter of Bullsbay—Over You sat a perfect trip, assumed command on the far turn, and willingly held the 3-5 favorite, Summon the Glam safe in the never-win-three Allowance slugfest.

Mike is conservative with the placement of his horses and prefers not to overly campaign them. His brother, Roger Sterling, is a Thoroughbred owner and breeder, and maintains horses with a wide variety of trainers up and down the Eastern seaboard.

◆

As the West Virginia maidens warmed-up for race 3, I kept raising my binoculars to follow an uncommonly marked gray/roan gelding named K Bee. Though his odds (32-1) may not have warranted my attention, his brisk morning trials and confident conduct on the track were telling a contrary tale. Veteran clocker Henry Allen assured me the recent

half-mile breeze from the gate in 47 seconds was accurate. The pedigree of this first timer, Kobe's Back—Polished Account, did not inspire me to dip my toes in the mutuel waters, and that turned out to be a very costly error.

Breaking from the last stall in the gate, K Bee stalked the pacesetters into the far turn before unleashing a torrid stretch run that left me speechless. The final margin of victory was 7 lengths for owner-breeder Swoosh LLC and trainer Lori Bourne.

It was Lori's first win of 2025, and the former jockey, current outrider and high-octane mother celebrated in style, by riding her pony directly into the winner's circle, dismounting, and hugging her daughter Madelyn for what seemed an eternity. Lori then climbed back aboard her faithful steed and was rudely reunited, as he commenced to buck and lunge as if to call forth a playful yeehaw for barn and team!

◆

Race 4 was a humble $5,000 claiming event and the winner was Cherokee Castle. The ultra-consistent daughter of Windsor Castle is now 7 years old and probably spends her waking hours wondering where her next home will be, as again she transferred barns. Bred by Law Legacy Stables and Ronney Brown, the sturdy West Virginia bay now sports a record of 45 starts with nine firsts, 12 seconds and 10 thirds. Her trainer, A.J. Rideoutt II, is a dedicated father and multi-sport coach to his three children, while his former runner got my vote as best turned out individual of the evening.

◆

On any given day of the week while clocking horses on the clubhouse turn, it's a good idea to keep your head on a swivel. Trainer David Rose often hurriedly weaves thru traffic to see one of his horses gallop. Like a few of the aforementioned trainers, Rose also performs the duties of groom and hot walker, thus his time is a premium commodity.

David's hectic routine is definitely paying dividends, as Manny Too, a son of Uncle Lino—Athena Moon, gamely met the challenge of runner-up Annapolis Road to prevail in the allowance engagement. Owned and bred by Nick Zavolas, Manny Too has the physique of a turf horse. Maybe Rose will recreate the success he had with a mare he once trained named Heathersdaddysbaby.

◆

Most horsemen salivate at the prospect of training a son or daughter of Fiber Sonde, and veteran conditioner Stacy Viands is ready to see just how good his value purchase, Fiber Proof, can be. Crushing a competitive field of maidens (Race 6) in his third career effort, this John McKee-bred exhibits all the traits of his prolific father…..speed, stamina and talent.

◆

An outstanding collection of West Virginia runners met in the feature race on this Mountaineer "block party" weekend, and taking advantage of a golden inside trip was Jubas's Hat Trick. Bettors nailed the top three order of finish. The son of Juba doggedly refused to lose for owner Casey's Legacy, trainer Ronnie Sigler and breeder Taylor Mountain Farm. The blanket finish between Juba's Hat Trick, Muad'dib and No Change depicted why West Virginia based sires Juba and Fiber Strong rank one-two in the states stallion order.

One of the most liked gentleman on the Charles Town backstretch, Ronnie recently suffered the loss of his son, Tyler. Death creates a void that you cannot heal, but leaves a memory no one can steal. The racing community at Charles Town collectively puts their curative arms around Ronnie and Elizabeth.

Benefits of Owning a WV-Bred and/or -Sired racehorse
Some of the best incentives in the nation!

- A minimum of three accredited races are written every day at Charles Town exclusively for registered WV-bred and/or -sired horses.
- West Virginia has the only program in the country that permits horses to win state-bred races that do not count against the horse's lifetime open conditions.
- The WV Thoroughbred Development Fund distributes over $4.5 million to breeders, owners, and stallion owners of accredited WV-bred and/or -sired horses based the horse's annual earnings at Charles Town and Mountaineer Park racetracks.
- The West Virginia Breeders Classics pays out almost $1 million in purses for WV-bred and/or -sired horses. It is held annually on the second Saturday in October.
- $800,000 in purses are allocated for up to 16 WV accredited stakes races during the year.
- Supplemental Purse Awards of up to 10% of the winner's share of the purse to the owner, breeder, and/or sire owner of the accredited WV-bred and/or -sired winner.
- West Virginia offers year-round racing with approximately 165 race days per year.

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Chasing
Brought to you by the Temple Gwathmey Steeplechase Foundation

She changed the 'old boys' club'

By Betsy Burke Parker

Al Quanbeck says he knows when not to argue with a female.

In life, it's served him well.

In the saddle, it's served him better.

Though he was only 22 with three years riding a few as an amateur and just four sanctioned hurdle wins before he got the mount, bug-boy Quanbeck recognized he had a unique opportunity when Virginia trainer Paul Fout legged him up on a quietly confident filly he had in the barn.

He just had to learn to listen to the young Virginia Guest homebred, help her when asked, stay quiet when she wanted to make her own decisions.

Owner-breeder Virginia Guest had big hopes for Life's Illusion since her half-sister Tarratine was already a top handicap hurdler, and Fout said Life's Illusion was even better.

Quanbeck says he recognized the look of eagles about the dark-colored filly the first time he met her. She wasn't quirky, he says, recalling that initial contact some 50 years later. She was a cool customer. "Self-assured," Quanbeck says.

The filly wanted you to point her in the right direction and leave her alone, Quanbeck adds. "I could hold her, but not for very long. She was strong, but she was so good, you'd support her but leave her be."

It proved a magical combination – the athleticism of Life's Illusion and the young rider who'd learned to sit quiet on a horse from pony club lessons and in the hunt field, and from schooling horses under the keen eye of former show ring champion Paul Fout. Life's Illusion and Quanbeck won two

Al Quanbeck and Life's Illusion in the 1975 NY Turf Writers. *©NSA Archives*

hurdle starts her 3-year-old season and added five the next year to become the first female 'chaser to win the Eclipse steeplechase award.

It's a feat repeated just once by another distaff jumper – The Mean Queen in 2021, and Quanbeck agrees that mares like that don't come along very often.

In early September, the Life's Illusion hurdle stakes is carded at Virginia's Colonial Downs, a $100,000 distaff hurdle handicap.

You can look up the mare on Equibase, but we wanted to know more. Quanbeck is the one who knew her best, knew when to argue and when to stay silent. He rode her in 20 of her 31 career starts - 11 of her 13 wins.

We caught up to Quanbeck by phone on the way home from shoeing a horse at the Thoroughbred Training Center near Lexington, Kentucky. He says even now, five decades later, he clearly remembers the filly phenom that many still consider America's best distaff hurdler of all times.

Temple Gwathmey Steeplechase Foundation: Life's Illusion. We can read her stats on Equibase, but you knew her best of all. You were in on the beginning of her career, and in on the end of it. It's been literally 50 years since her champion season – tell us about her.

Alton Quanbeck Jr.: From the start, she wasn't very friendly, just sort of cool and collected.

She was opinionated.

Maybe a little standoff-ish.

TGSF: Speaking of standing off, we hear she'd do that pretty often in her races.

AQ: Oh good lord yes. She could stand off and jump from anywhere. Sometimes she'd leave the ground, but she'd save my butt from asking too bold and she'd add. She got me out of trouble a few times.

She was really smart.

She wasn't easy to gallop, a little headstrong, and you kinda had to let her do her thing. You could rate her, but not for long.

I will say, I think Paul Fout's horse show career and experience really gave him an upper hand when it came to teaching a horse to really use themselves and jump well. He'd also school us riders sometimes. It made a big difference in the way I rode a horse to a fence.

TGSF: You were a young rider when you got the mount on Life's Illusion.

AQ: I was a student (studying mechanical engineering) at UVa in the early '70s. I'd

come home to Middleburg on summers and on weekends and gallop for Mr. Fout.

I was 21, 22 when I started riding her.

You know, that was an era when the jockey colony was real competitive – we had Skip Brittle active, Tom Skiffington, Jerry Fishback. All those guys, and Mr. Fout was awfully good to me, putting 'the young kid' up on that filly.

TGSF: About your youth and your college intersecting with this phenomenal race filly: You sort of blame Life's Illusion for your permanent break from school?

AQ: That's a funny story. Sort of funny.

I'd taken that fall semester off from UVa to ride Life's Illusion and gallop that winter for Mr. Fout.

After she ran so good (winning two of five starts over hurdles at 3 in 1974), Mr. Fout rightly said this is pretty hard for you to go back to school and just do this race riding thing on weekends.

So he said, 'I hate to ask, but how 'bout take another semester off for this mare?

My folks were pretty cool about it.

She won at Carolina Cup, Tanglewood and Radnor that spring. Then I of course had the summer off, so we went to New York (and Life's Illusion sparkled with two wins at Saratoga.)

I think my parents gave up on me going back to college at that point.

(Eventual Hall of Fame trainer) Jonathan Sheppard asked me to come ride for him, so I made the heart-breaking decision to leave Mr. Fout's. He was sad, but Mr. Fout was also pretty cool about it.

Then Frank Whiteley asked me to be his assistant trainer.

Then I went out on my own, trained for 20-some years after leaving Whiteley's.

Then I took up a farrier career.

I just never went back to school. I guess now there's not much point.

TGSF: What takes up your time these days?

AQ: I shoe a horse or two a day to keep me active and fit. But I've taken up snowboarding in a big way. Last year, Doug Fout (Paul Fout's son, Doug rode Life's Illusion when Quanbeck went to work for Sheppard) took me out west. In April, I went heli-snowboarding for the first time.

Talk about intense. The horses have nothing on that.

TGSF: The Life's Illusion stake tops a nice program at Colonial this week. You've been to Colonial Downs?

AQ: Yeah, I ran a horse or two (on the flat) at Colonial Downs. They didn't open 'til I was pretty much at the end of my training career, but the dates suited and I think the turf is great.

Al Quanbeck at the Foxfield Spring Races. *©NSA Archives*

Jonathan Sheppard used to tell me all the time, he thought that mare was the best ever. That's something, coming from him. I'm glad they're remembering this mare this way.

Alton Quanbeck Jr. – Just the Facts

Age: 72
Hometown: Middleburg, Virginia
Current residence: Midway, Kentucky
Farrier: Still works "a light schedule" as a racetrack farrier at the Thoroughbred Training Center in Lexington.

Race career: Riding from 1971 to 1980, won 66 of 465 races and almost $400,000 in purses.

Training career: Training from the early '80s to the early '00s, saddled 124 winners on the flat from 1,018 starts and almost $4 million in earnings. Top horses include grade 3 winners Shiny Key, Gold Alert and grade 1 level Jalaajel.

Family: Alton Quanbeck Sr. was also an expert rider – he was the alternate for the 1964 Olympic three-day event team for Tokyo. (The U.S. squad won team silver that year, with steeplechase-associated riders including Michael Page, Mike Plumb, Kevin Freeman and Lana Dupont - later Lana Dupont Wright.)

Quanbeck Sr. retired as a colonel after 22 years in the Air Force. He worked for the Brookings Institution, the Senate Intelligence Committee and the CIA. Quanbeck Sr. authored several books and papers on his time in the USAF.

When Quanbeck Sr. was assigned to the Pentagon, he purchased a farm on Sam Fred Road in Middleburg Hunt territory.

Quanbeck Jr. hunted with his parents with Middleburg and rode with the Middleburg Orange County Pony Club. Paul Fout's wife, Eve, founded MOCPC, and she was the first to spy the young rider's talent, recommending Quanbeck to her husband when he was looking for summer help.

Quanbeck earned his pony club B rating before turning his attention to racing.

Owner / breeder Virginia (Guest) Van Alen and Life's Illusion at the Colonial Cup in 1976. *©McCulley / NSA archives*

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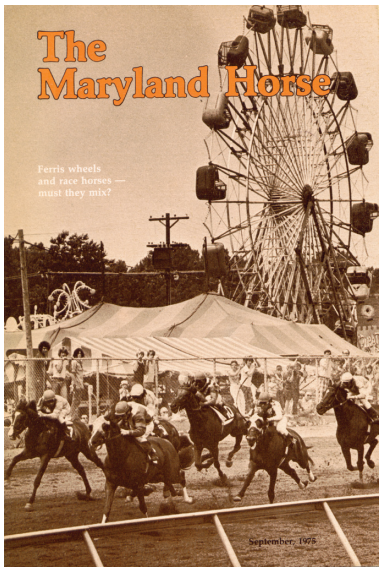
— Looking Back —



50 years ago

■ In the latest "Stud Managers Seminar," a series of lectures presented in early 1974 by the Extension Service of the University of Maryland and the Maryland Horse Breeders Association and printed in serialized form, Joe Thomas, vice president and general manager of Windfields Farm, discussed selection and matings.

"We are all in this business to (1) raise the big horse and (2) make a buck, and there is no doubt about it if you raise the big horse you can make a big buck," started Thomas. "Jack Price [breeder/owner of Carry Back] even made a profession out of a big horse. Since breeding Thoroughbreds is a game of probabilities the aim is to shift the odds in your favor and this can be done even with a small budget."

Thomas hooked his audience with his next point: "To begin – (1) Black type is an expensive guide to racing ability. (2) Pedigree reveals more fiction than fact. (3) Conformation as form relates to type is irrelevant, but as form relates to function is vital."

Thomas was one of the world's most successful Thoroughbred breeding authorities. When he died of cancer at 59 in May 1984, editor Snowden Carter wrote: "He left his newspaper job in Lexington in 1956 to work for Mr. [E.P.]Taylor and together they created an empire. . . Windfields wouldn't have been Windfields without Joe Thomas."

■ Virginia Guest 4-year-old filly Life's Illusion won the Lovely Night Handicap and New York Turf Writers Cup steeplechases in back-to-back starts at Saratoga. The Maryland-bred daughter of Virginia stallion *Mystic II, trained by Paul Fout, defeated a stellar field in the Turf Writers including American champion jumpers – runner-up Soothsayer and fourth-place finisher *Gran Kan.

Life's Illusion earned the first of her three Maryland-bred champion steeplechaser titles that year. She was the Eclipse Award winner in 1975.

■ Johns Hopkins University graduate Leo S. Nechamkin II, 25, trained a one-horse stable (Croisiadore, a recent two-time winner at Timonium). He also worked in the admissions department at all Maryland racetracks. "I can't think of anything that could ever equal training horses," he said. He blamed his father for being bitten by the horse bug. "He's had horses for nearly 25 years, and so has my uncle, Joe Nechamkin."

Nechamkin stopped training after a couple of years, then returned in the 1990s. His best runner, Gators N Bears, purchased from the estate of breeder Bob Camac, won multiple graded stakes, earned $804,393, and stood at stud in the region.

75 years ago

■ Prominent business leaders, horsemen and the Save Timonium Committee leapt into action when industrial interests made a firm offer for the Timonium State Fair property, and that the Maryland Jockey Club, the majority stockholder (72 percent), was willing to put its interest on the market.

Organizers created a campaign to sell bonds to finance the purchase of the majority shareholdings. "Plans are being formulated whereby all horsemen, owners, trainers, show exhibitors and others will be invited to participate in this vitally important bond drive. The interest is good, the investment a secure one, and the cause one that will appeal to one and all who have an interest in the future expansion of the Timonium Programme."

■ Disposing of its stock in the Timonium Fair and race course would allow the Maryland Jockey Club to start the Pimlico rebuilding program almost immediately upon conclusion of the fall meeting. Architects and engineers had been busy for months outlining plans for Pimlico's rejuvenation. "Whether any attempt will be made to reconstruct the entire establishment by spring has not been announced," wrote Don Reed. "But it appears more likely that the job may be split, with a portion being done between fall and spring meetings with the remainder to be accomplished next summer."

■ Humphrey Finney traversed the country in July and August. After spending time at Santa Anita and Hollywood Park, he was soon in Lexington.

It wasn't all work, as evidenced in his July 22 entry of The Editor's Saddle-Bag:

"Flew to Lexington this afternoon for the Keeneland Sales, arriving in time for a look at a good number before going out to Bourbon County to the Stoner Creek Farm of the Hertz family for a delightful buffet dinner party, which was highlighted by the world premiere of Gloria Swanson's picture *Sunset Boulevard*."

■ The Battleship and Manly Steeplechases, two infield fixtures which graced the Pimlico Fall meeting for years, would run that November at the National Hunt Races in Middleburg, Va.

According to S. Bryce Wing, the head of the committee sponsoring the two-day Middleburg meeting, officials of the Maryland Jockey Club advised him of their approval of this move, necessary since Pimlico would not card jumping races in the fall.

25 years ago

■ Richard Mandella-trained Dixie Union and Bob Baffert-trained favorite Captain Steve were late to the paddock for the $1 million Haskell – Mandella explaining it was a case of not being familiar with Monmouth Park protocol – but they were one-two when it counted most as Dixie Union nailed Captain Steve late to win by three-quarters of a length.

Having missed the Triple Crown races while recovering from surgery to remove knee chips, Dixie Union got his first Grade 1 and made his case as one of the best of his crop – among those in the beaten field were Milwaukee Brew, More Than Ready and Belmont Stakes-G1 winner Commendable. In his prior start, the son of Dixieland Band missed by a neck to Tiznow in the Affirmed Handicap-G3.

Baffert hit the board for the third time with his third starter, having sent out Anet (second, 1997) and Forestry (third, 1999), but was still seeking his first Haskell win.

The Haskell's leading trainer with nine wins, the first with Point Given in 2001 and most recently with Authentic in 2020, Baffert maintained his on-the-board finishes streak with Goal Oriented's third this year. His record stands at 18-9-6-3.

■ Two Virginia-bred colts joined the wave of million-dollar horses at the Keeneland July yearling sale.

The Pennsylvania-based Walnut Green bloodstock agency of Russell and Richard Jones consigned both for breeder Morven Stud. The fourth most expensive colt in the sale at $2.15 million was a son of Seeking the Gold out of Sheila's Revenge, by Lord Avie. The Satish Sanan family's Padua Stables made the purchase. Electric Society (Ire)'s son of Danzig sold for $1.1 million to Clover Club Co. Ltd.

The Danzig was the better racehorse. Exported that year to Japan, Star El Dorado won four of 54 starts over seven seasons, placed in four stakes, and earned $893,150. As part of John Kluge's Morven Stud dispersal that fall, Electric Society sold for $1.35 million at Keeneland in foal to Deputy Minister; Sheila's Revenge brought $200,000 in foal to Gone West.

■ The Saratoga yearling sale saw 25 Mid-Atlantic-breds gross $7,315,000; 17 brought six figures. The top price for the region was Heronwood Farm's $775,000 Virginia-bred Storm Cat colt out of Beacci, by Alydar, sold to Demi O'Byrne.

Two Northview Stallion Station sires were represented – Polish Numbers had five sell, for an average of $194,000; Two Punch's three yearlings averaged $188,333. Two Punch was the third-leading sire at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July sale, with three averaging $168,333.

■ Two-time champion steeplechase jockey Jonathan Kiser died at 22 from injuries sustained in an accident at his sister's home in Maryland. "As a jockey he had few peers," wrote Joe Clancy. "Kiser was on his way to stardom and was the first legitimate threat to names such as Aitcheson, Smithwick, Adams and Fishback on the pages of history." Riding primarily for trainer Tom Voss, he had expanded his client base to include almost every trainer on the circuit and was atop the standings at the time of his death.

■ An excerpt from Edward L. Bowen's new book, *Dynasties–Great Thoroughbred Stallions*, focused on William L. Brann and Robert S. Castle's *Challenger II. Standing his entire career in Maryland, he was renowned as the sire of two-time Horse of the Year Challedon and distaff champions Gallorette and Bridal Flower, topped the national ranking and became a champion broodmare sire.

10 years ago

■ American Pharoah's connections fielded offers from tracks around the country following his historic Triple Crown run, dangling large purses, added incentives, and promotional gimmicks. The eagerly anticipated next start for racing's biggest star was destined to be the Grade 1 Haskell Invitational at Monmouth Park as New Jersey-based Zayat Stables' Ahmed Zayat expressed that desire for his homebred son of Pioneerof the Nile following the Belmont Stakes. Trainer Bob Baffert's record in Monmouth's signature event – seven wins (one with Zayat's Paynter in 2012), three seconds and a third – seemed a precursor of greater things to come.

A week of celebration and a record crowd of 60,983 greeted the champion, and he delivered, cruising home with ease.

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

■ Writer Vinnie Perrone devled into the career of trainer Mary Eppler. An accounting degree and job at Blue Cross Blue Shield in the late 1970s morphed into working at Sagamore Farm, training classic hopefuls, including Traitor and Victory Gallop, and a long career that included stable star, former claimer Page McKenney. "In 17 starts over 15 months, Page McKenney finished third or better without fail, earned more than $700,000 for owner Adam Staple and stamped himself a bona-fide Mid-Atlantic handicap star at age 5."

Claimed for $16,000 at Penn National in July 2013, Pennsylvania-bred Page McKenney retired at age 8 with earnings of $1,905,940. He ran in 33 consecutive stakes from August 2014 through his last start on July 29, 2018, won 15, and finished in the top three 29 times, plus two fourths.

Don't go in the Water

Fifty years ago, the movie *Jaws* premiered and didn't escape the wit of *Maryland Horse* cartoonist Nancy Boyce.

Maryland artist Nancy Boyce created cartoons for the pages of *Maryland Horse* from 1953 until 1986. From "Bill the Stable Pony" to "Confidentially Speaking," they were amusing and timely commentaries on racetrack and farm life, foxhunting adventures and horse showing, usually with a dash of the political irony and sometimes current events.

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